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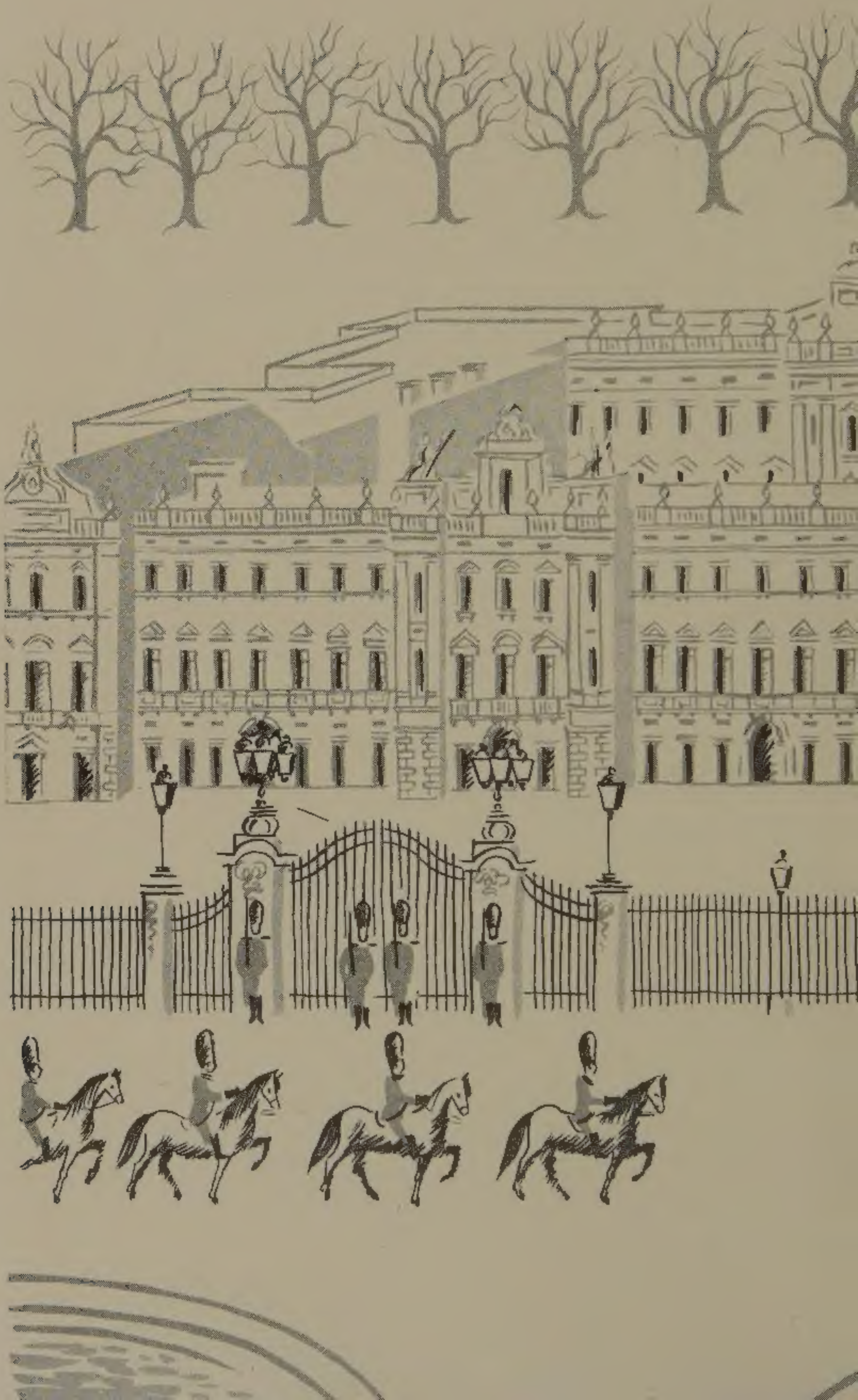

CHEAPSIDE

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

THE BOY JONES

The Boy Jones

Patricia Gordon

with drawings by Adrienne Adams

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION BY
LOIS WINKEL

GREGG PRESS
BOSTON

With the exception of the Introduction, this is a complete photographic reprint of a work first published in New York by The Viking Press in 1943.

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Introduction

THE Boy Jones was first published in 1943, in the midst of the Second World War. It may — or may not, such is the enigma of the book — have represented an unconscious yearning for the stability and security of Queen Victoria's age, the surety of Empire.

But if it did, or does, this only added to the strange aspect of a very simple book with many dimensions. First, and most importantly to the young reader for whom it is obviously primarily intentioned, it is the adventure story of a poor boy — disadvantaged, would be the current catch phrase — who sneaks into the Buckingham Palace of Queen Victoria not once but four times, and has, thereby, extraordinary adventures.

It is also a picture of that palace, of that Queen, and of her prickly consort Prince Albert, an extraordinary couple.

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It is as well a picture of a city and an era and by extension an Empire. It is romanticized and yet realistic: the Empire from the viewpoint of a small, ignorant, poor boy — deprived and not knowing, or indeed even particularly caring, that he was deprived — in full possession of personal dignity, a sense of personal worth and yet sensible of an order of things, and an order in the world.

The book, therefore, is a strange kind of tour de force. It is simultaneously an individual adventure story; a guided tour of early Victorian London without blinders — from Jones' homes in a dank cellar and later a garret, through the streets of Cheapside, into a school held in a stable, tricking one's way into Madam Tussaud's Wax Works, to imprisonment in "Commonfields"; and beyond all else a moving tribute to an inimitable spirit.

Jones' persistent attempts to live within the walls of Buckingham Palace withstand twice being jailed and even being sent to sea. *The Boy Jones* reflects a character style now probably considered quaint. Jones accepts his current status in life but sees no reason why it should remain so. He is determined to achieve despite the obstacles and punishments. He neither gnashes his teeth, nor bemoans his fate, but instead seeks alternate avenues of

gaining permanent entrance to Buckingham Palace.

The Boy Jones thus reflects a championship of an underdog — an underdog who really is no underdog, but who instead reflects a self-respect, integrity, compassionate love of life, and a ready willingness to undertake challenges.

This is by no means to say that dealing with important issues weights the tenor of *The Boy Jones*. The author, Patricia Gordon, has employed the lightest of touches in her deft presentation of a rollicking good tale. Peopled with characters of substance, enlived by a string of daring adventures she has captured the flavor of a world lost to history — a taste of the past. Adrienne Adam's whimsical pen and ink live drawings may appear in black and white but through their spirit and Mrs. Gordon's words the reader perceives the full range of colors, tastes, smells, and movement that made up The Boy Jones' world.

It is a distinct honor to introduce a new audience to the pleasures of *The Boy Jones*.

Lois Winkel
Greensboro, North Carolina

For R. M. P.

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THE BOY JONES

Chapter One

JONES and the British Lion fought side by side for their Queen. They faced the dragon's fearsome jaws while the Unicorn pranced around behind the monster, attacking the rear with well-placed thrusts of his sharp pointed horn.

Round and round the battle raged by the light of candle-sized diamonds and rubies. The Queen, as became royalty, neither screamed nor cheered, but she stood on her throne and held up her skirts and waited for her defenders to emerge victorious from the skirmish.

Step by step Jones and the Lion forced back the dragon until he was at the top of the Grand Staircase. His lashing tail slithered down a few steps and his rough scales caught in the thick crimson velvet stair carpet. He lost his balance and rolled down, over and over, winding himself tightly into a red cocoon. The others rushed down after

him and Jones and the Lion sat hard on the wriggling bundle while the Unicorn pinned the ends neatly with his horn.

"Helb! I'b sbotherig!" The muffled voice had no resemblance to the fierce roars they had listened to a few minutes before.

"Well, we'll let you 'ave your 'ead out if you're good. But mind, now, no nasty tricks like fire-breathing." Jones was both generous and firm as was proper in a hero.

"I probise!"

A pale, meek face damp with crocodile tears lolled out of the awkward bundle they laid before the Queen. Jones was panting a bit, though otherwise as fresh as morning, but the Lion had lost a fang and his crown had slipped over one ear. The Unicorn hurriedly rubbed up his horn with a piece of chamois to look his best in the royal presence. Her Pretty Little Majesty took her fingers out of her ears, stepped down off the throne and came to Jones.

"Well done," she said softly. "For this you shall be Sir Jones . . ."

Slow hoofs clopped and a heavy wagon rumbled over the cobble stones. A new London day was begun. The noise twitched Jones out of his dream. He lay rolled up in a ragged quilt, still sleep-dazed, trying to get back into the gold and marble room he had just left.

There were all sorts and conditions of Joneses—hundreds of them—in London when the young Princess Drina became Her Majesty Queen Victoria of England. Superior Joneses of title and rank. Middle class Joneses

in highly respected professions. Lower middle class Joneses plying their trades of greengrocer and tailor and their crafts of silversmith and ironmonger. In the lesser orders were hard-working Joneses who repaired the streets, or tended fires and cleaned their masters' boots, supporting their families of still smaller Joneses as best they might.

Least of all the Joneses—to everyone but himself—was the boy who was waking to a cold winter dawn. He had no other name, and had never heard whether one had been given him. Whenever he thought the matter over, it did seem likely that his mother would have called her baby something more affectionate and less formal. But she died before he was a year old and he had grown as poor orphans often do, passed about from one to another kindly soul who fed him while they had crusts to share and gave the responsibility elsewhere when there were none.

Almost from babyhood Jones made his own way. At about six he could look so gently forlorn when he returned a lady's dropped handkerchief that she must know more about him—how much more depended upon the time since his last meal and how clever a story he could call up at the moment. The mere fact of being an orphan was often enough to produce the wherewithal to buy a penny bun. It was well that he liked penny buns for they were his staple diet. But as any unvaried diet will, buns often became a trifle monotonous.

It was at such times that the little Jones embroidered the story of his life to suit his listener and the demands of

his stomach. Now he was the victim of a cruel uncle who insisted that his nephew beg to bring home money for grog or be beaten for his failure. Again he was the sole support of a beautiful but crippled older sister. As he grew, the stories grew too, for no one could deny that this Jones had imagination. His hearers often looked hard put to it to keep straight faces, but they nearly always rewarded him suitably—now and then with as much as threepence. With threepence Jones could eat his fill of fish and chips topped off with a pennyworth of hot toasted chestnuts for dessert.

Even without money he could wheedle some of his supply from Alf the Chestnut Man. In return for the scorching brown nuts he would cry Alf's wares for him, and Alf was glad to rest his voice which all day long had been calling: "Ot chestnuts—right 'ere now. Walk up! Walk up! All ye can eat for a penny."

Jones' friends, by an odd coincidence, were often persons whose way of life made them valuable allies for a lad who lived and ate by his wits. There was 'Enery the Baked 'Tato Man, a newcomer from St. George's Fields. Jones welcomed him with real enthusiasm. The strange locomotive cook-shop, new to London that very year, was a constant source of wonder to 'Enery's youthful admirer. From this apparatus, 'Enery would take a steaming potato, split and season it with salt and pepper and a bit of butter, and exchange the mealy delicacy for a halfpenny—a ha'p'orth which often warmed Jones' hungry stomach whether or not any coin of the realm passed between them.

Being by nature as nearly an honest child as was reasonable to expect, he did not steal from the street barrows unless he was quite hungry. Then he did it so cleverly that he was never caught, though now and then he detected a sharp look from some coster whose stall had provided him with a bit of fruit.

Chapter Two

BY now Jones was quite awake but he was puzzled. A queer feeling of excitement made his stomach quiver. He wondered if it might be just his dream. An especially exciting dream it had been, to be sure, for his greatest ambition was to live in Buckingham Palace. Any chance of having such lordly plans realized belonged in so remote a future that it was most unlikely that they were the only cause of his present impatient high spirits.

"Now I know! It's my birthday!" Jones shouted, though there was no one there to hear him. He rolled across the hard dirt floor until he was untangled from the quilt, then jumped to his feet. How could he have forgotten even for a few minutes that this was his twelfth birthday?

Jones had arrived at this satisfactory age by the novel and simple method of counting up all the years he could recall and adding two. It seemed reasonable that he

wouldn't remember much before he was two if the babies he saw about were any evidence, and he was quite sure that he had been a clever enough child to begin remembering as soon as he could walk and talk.

Since he had no idea, nor had anyone else, upon what date nor even in what month he had been born, he had to give himself a birthday. To be sure that he would not forget he resolved that it should fall upon one of the Non-movable Feasts. The next such holiday was January sixth which thereafter became Twelfth Night and My Birthday.

"Reason enough to feel excited," thought Jones. "This may well be a day when I can do a bit of real good for myself." He had kept in mind that pastry cooks all over England outdid themselves in the manufacture of the most elaborate confections for the celebration of Twelfth Night. It should not be beyond the bounds of reason that a bright lad could wangle himself a bit of birthday cake.

He shivered through a hurried washing-up. He didn't come out of it so very clean but his intentions were of the best. As there was no mirror in which to view the results, a smudged ear, certain dark shadows about the neck, and unruly yellow-streaked-with-dirt curls were not matters to brood upon.

Jones came up from his dark cellar home to a scarcely lighter daybreak, resolving that on the morrow he would seek out another residence with fewer rats. Only a temporary one, of course, until he should go to live at Buckingham Palace.

Not that he was afraid of rats, he told himself sternly,

but he did like to have them run when he shouted "SCAT!" There was one in particular in this basement with a most provoking habit of tidying its whiskers unconcernedly through any amount of hue and cry. More insulting still, the rat had no respect whatever for Jones' aim and did not even bother to dodge a mug hurled at him. Such impudence was not to be borne by any lad of spirit.

Perhaps a garret could be found. The lazier rats at any rate wouldn't climb so high and it would be fun to be where he could see the stars and the sun could creep through cracks and chinks in the roof tiles to dance in the dust motes.

Another important consideration in the proposed house-hunting was the matter of wetness. Jones liked the smell of wet attic better than the dank oozy odor of damp cellar. There was a great difference in smells of wetness as he had long since learned. The cellary kind clung to clothes and caused nasty green moldy whiskers to form on boots. In a leaky garret you got more water during a rainstorm but with luck it dripped right down through to the floor below. This wasn't so much luck for the tenants underneath but they would probably have pans to put under the largest dribbles or useful cracks in their own floors. None of these families had much furniture to be moved about to avoid leaks.

Jones' own proud possessions carefully collected during several years consisted of an ewer without a handle, a cracked basin which did not match it, a three legged table propped into a corner, and a perfectly good new cricket

stool which had somehow dropped off a furniture lorry. The ragged quilt was both bed and bedding and a stone ginger beer crock served to hold such short ends of tallow candles as he was able to scavenge from time to time. While somewhat lacking in luxury, the simplicity of his furnishings made setting the place to rights an easy matter.

It was cold and gray. The drizzle of the day before had changed overnight to sleet which clung to his thin jacket and made his eyelashes prickle. Jones' thoughts turned for comfort to his friend Mrs. Murrit and within a few minutes he arrived panting at the stall in Cheapside where she served hot coffee to coachmen and night laborers who had just finished their work.

Mrs. Murrit greeted Jones hospitably. "Good morning, young man. Won't you join me in a cup of the cheering beverage against the inclemency of the weather? Do you come in here now, away from the herd which moves without."

Jones ducked under the counter and presently was steaming gently beside the fire, drinking scalding coffee diluted with milk and three heaping spoonsful of sugar.

"Thank you kindly, Mrs. Murrit. And I've often meant to ask you before, were you by any chance stolen from the upper classes when just a little child? Your words are that grand that I've never 'eard the like from anyone else."

"Well, no, my dear." Mrs. Murrit was pleased and showed it plainly. "My mother was a bit above all this I must say, having been lady's maid to the Countess of Penbroke and also able to speak the French language. But she married a Buggins and that did for her. It was a great

comedown for her and she brought me up to be superior to my station in a manner of speaking. However, no practical good ever came of it as you can see."

"But you sound wonderful. I could listen all day, that I could." Being pressed, Jones shyly accepted a buttered loaf with his second cup of coffee.

"It's my birthday, Mrs. Murrit, and I'm going to 'ave a Twelfth Night Birthday Party tonight and you are the first person I thought to ask. If the weather clears we could 'ave a bonfire in Breadloaf Alley and cook our supper there."

"Many Happy Returns, I'm sure. I shall be delighted to attend your party. But it occurs to me that it might be well to have it indoors. Now if you and your friends will come to my little home I've some coals that I've been saving against just such an occasion and it will be ever so cozy."

"How good you are, Mrs. Murrit, and what a lovely idea! The coals will be a birthday present to me—the only one that ever I've 'ad. This is my first birthday as well as my twelfth, you see, because it was only last week that I thought it up."

Mrs. Murrit and Jones discussed details for some time with great enthusiasm. When their arrangements were completed a happy ragamuffin went on his way to issue invitations to the party.

The weather no longer seemed harsh to Jones as he darted about from one narrow street to another, warmed by the coffee and alight with excitement. Now he no longer bothered to walk closely under the overhanging

second stories of old buildings and he did not notice the wetness of the garments that clung to his thin frame.

While still in Cheapside he came upon Artie, a dour costermonger whose barrow was heaped high with winkles. Very little faith in human nature had Artie and he eyed Jones' approach without favor. The boy's exuberant greeting was returned a bit coldly—a lack of enthusiasm which failed to touch Jones as he went on to tell the man about his birthday and to invite him to the party.

Such puppyish friendliness was disarming. Artie found himself relenting. "Right-oh, Jones, I'll be there," though he resolved privately to keep a vigilant eye upon his stock that day since he had no wish to provide the party as well as attend it.

In Newgate Street Jones stopped at the Cat and Salutation Tavern to see his friend the pot-boy. Willie was a lad of his own age with whom he had shared certain adventures in the past and he greeted the idea with noisy eagerness and a lavish promise to provide good brown ale for all the company.

Alf and 'Enery were asked, of course, and both accepted gladly enough. They were fond of Jones and Mrs. Murrit's promise of a fire had a more comforting sound for such an evening than their own chill lodgings. It went without saying that they would not arrive at the party empty-handed. Jones felt that the problem of feeding his guests was becoming a simpler one by the minute.

Past grim Old Bailey, Jones rushed on up Ludgate Hill just in time to catch Mrs. Hawkins, a charring friend, as she was leaving for her day's work. This good woman was

a widow who explained to anyone who would listen that " 'Awkins was a good man enough but of a restful nature." Not content with his extra bit of sleep o'Sundays as were other hackmen, he died to obtain a more permanent repose leaving her to support four children.

The younger Hawkinses ranged in ages from eleven-year-old Eliza who mothered the others during the day to a mere babe of three with very little sense. This infant seemed convinced that the only proper way to look at the world was from upside down between her own fat legs. No one saw her in any other position unless she was asleep or had been upended by Eliza at feeding time.

Jones was particularly fond of Mrs. Hawkins who had often taken him home to share a kipper and bread and drippings with her own brood. That it was always a day-before-kipper presented by an employer who had no further use for it made it no whit less tasty. No food is so choice as the well smoked herring to the Londoners who live within sound of Bow Bells.

There had been times when Jones stayed several days with these friends, sleeping with the other children in truckle beds or upon the floor. But always, for he was of an independent nature, he went on his way before his presence could become a burden. This made him all the more popular and he was welcomed whenever he returned.

"Well, you are a one, 'aving a grand party as ever was," Mrs. Hawkins said as she accepted for them all. "We'll be there come eight o'clock and thankee kindly for the asking. And now I must get on to polish the brass on Mrs.

Coombe's front door or there'll be trouble aplenty. The woman is that nasty-natured that I wouldn't put it past 'er to blow on it 'erself and then blame me because the shine is off the knocker." Still grumbling not too ill-naturedly, Mrs. Hawkins made off down the hill with as much speed as her bulk could attain.

Chapter Three

HIS guest list completed, Jones had to hurry the several miles to Leicester Square to carry out the second part of his plan. The way was well known to him for it was his usual route when on scouting trips to Buckingham Palace. In the narrow streets, Londoners jostled each other rudely and noisily as they went about their morning's business and Jones for once was glad to be small and thin.

He had not gone more than a quarter of a mile along the Strand when he saw the head of a huge shire horse through the dark arch of a lane which rose steeply from the river side. Such a giant with flowing mane and enormous furry hooves always delighted him and was doubly welcome this morning for Jones proposed to reach his goal riding on the coal-wagon.

As the awkward van turned slowly into the Strand, wheels slipping on wet cobbles, he clambered over the

backboard and made his way up the sliding coals to the top of the heap. From this perch he surveyed the passing scene and sang loudly:

Gay go up and gay go down
To ring the bells of London town.
Oranges and lemons
Say the bells of St. Clements.
Lend me five farthings
Say the bells of St. Martins.
When will you pay me?
Say the bells of Old Bailey.
When I am rich
Say the bells of Shoreditch.
When will that be?
Say the bells of Stepney.
I'm sure I don't know
Says the big bell of Bow.

In the days of Queen Anne Leicester Square had been a fashionable district of fine homes with neatly wrought iron railings dividing the road from the basements. Behind each dwelling then was a faithfully tended lawn and garden. But Leicester Square had changed sadly. By 1839 Waterloo House and other great mansions, now ill-kept and shabby, were the shops of gun-makers, haberdashers, porter and ale merchants, and pastry cooks.

It was for the last of these that Jones was watching. When he spied the gilded wooden letters that announced one Hubbs to the world as a confectioner of merit he slid down, bringing with him a small shower of loose coals. This was an unhoped for rain of fortune. Off came his jacket and the coals were gathered into it carefully even to

one no larger than an acorn. He tied the sleeves together to hold his treasure. His bare arms were soon a mottled purple from the cold but this was no time for concern about trifling discomforts.

The many-paned window of Mr. Hubbs SELECT PASTRIES BY APPOINTMENT presented an enchanting array to the boy's wide eyes. It seemed quite beyond belief that the Twelfth Night cakes were the inspiration of a human mind and much less the work of human hands.

Over the tops and sides of the cakes was a frostwork of white spun sugar embellished with colored figures of Kings and Queens; palaces in winter—that one was Buckingham without a doubt—gypsy girls with tambourines and swirling skirts, church steeples complete to the weather vanes atop them, dancing bears with their keepers —the whole surrounded with true-lover's-knots in pink and green citron and black currant and red raspberry paste. Jones was quite sure that Mr. Hubbs' appointment was to the Queen herself. Her Majesty would be a strange queen indeed if she could resist such elegant confections, any one of which would grace the royal table.

Had any further incentive been needed to prod Jones' courage, here it was in full measure. A cluster of little bells tinkled above the door as he opened it and such a delicious smell of spice and fruit peels and brandy greeted him that his nose twitched like that of a curious puppy.

He entered upon a scene of the greatest activity. Assistant pastry cooks bustled about mixing sugar plums of entrancing colors. Mrs. Hubbs was arranging sticks of barley sugar, bits of holly and cut-paper roses into an

elaborate display. Even Mr. Hubbs had lost some of his usual calm.

Jones' voice cracked from excitement.

"Could I work for you today, please, Sir? I can run errands or scrub kettles." He would much prefer the latter task and a bit of privacy in which to lick them first but it seemed tactless to mention this.

"You have come at a good time, Boy. I need the help of everyone who can do anything at all. I'll pay you tuppence an hour and give you dinner. But first you go through to the back hallway. You'll find a wash-hand stand there and water and soap. Use them well. You look as if you'd come off a coal heap."

"I did, Sir, thank you kindly. But I'll wash as you'd never know me and work ever so, you'll see."

"Hurry about it then," said Mr. Hubbs. And "Hurry about it" was what Jones heard for the rest of the day from everyone as he rushed from one chore to another with no time to catch his breath. Sometimes he was badly mixed up by different orders coming from several people at once, but he coped with them all as well as he was able and proved eminently satisfactory in his work.

When all but the last cake had been delivered, and all sold except it and one in the window, and all the sweetmeats had been bought, a cheerful calm settled over this hive of activity. Business had been good and Mr. Hubbs was pleased. He chucked Mrs. Hubbs under the chin with great good humor. He made jokes with his assistants, a sure sign of the holiday season and good trade.

As they sat around in the kitchen eating bread and

cheese at closing time, Jones told them about his Twelfth Night Birthday party. Mr. Hubbs responded in princely style. The cake that was left in the window—a bit stale from being on display since Christmas but still very gorgeous—was presented to Jones with suitable best wishes and the undercooks all drank his health in their beer.

No pretty speech would come when Jones tried to thank them but they all accepted his blushing stammerings and patted his shoulder with many a "There, there, now" from Mrs. Hubbs. She was a motherly soul when not too busy.

Jones was in a fever of impatience to get home but first he must go to Portman Square. The last delivery entrusted to him by Mr. Hubbs was a cake to be taken to the town house of the Lady Sandwich. Portman Square was a good deal out of his way and he did not dare to run for fear of dropping the two cakes and his bundle of coals. His arms ached as he trotted quickly through short streets and long ones but he wasted no time feeling sorry for himself. Fortunately the weather had cleared, becoming crisply cold, so he didn't have to worry about the cakes getting wet.

When he reached it, Portman Square was dark save for an occasional flickering gas lamp, except where yellow light spilled from the windows and open door of a large house onto an elegant painted and gilded coach. Jones stopped and looked up at the fat bewigged coachman on the hammer cloth and at the pair of well matched six-foot-tall footmen standing at the back in full glory of powder, plush, and gold lace.

Jones coughed several times to attract their attention but the coachman and the footmen ignored him, all three staring unblinkingly ahead. They were used to looking bored and superior when street urchins admired their great elegance. But Jones was there on business, so he asked:

"Does the Lady Sandwich live here?"

There was no reply even when he repeated the question, and he started up the steps. Then the coachman so far forgot his dignity as to shout roughly.

"Come down from there this instant, you brat. If you 'ave any business, go to the servant's door. If you 'aven't, you'd best be off before you get a beating."

By now, Jones had had quite enough of these pompous and rude servants. He kept right on up the steps. At the open door he stopped and peered in. No one was in sight for the moment. The porter's huge leather bee-hive chair was empty. At any other time Jones could have stayed for an hour just peering in at the splendid hall but now his own guests were waiting.

Even while he was wondering how best to rouse someone, a lady appeared on the stairs followed by her maid. Jones stared round-eyed at her. She wore a ballgown of primrose taffeta and lace, her wide skirts rustling and billowing as she hurried down. Jewels winked and sparkled in her hair and on her throat and arms. She was the most beautiful lady Jones had ever seen.

"Well, Child, who are you?" Her voice was kind.

"Please, My Lady, I've brought your Twelfth Night cake from Mr. 'Ubbs."

He was still holding both the cake boxes as well as his coals. When he tried to detach the proper cake, his coat slipped from his arms. Out onto the black and white marble floor rolled all the coals. When he tried to catch them, both cakes plopped down after them. This was dreadful, like a nightmare. A manservant came hurrying out. He and the maid both said, "Oh, My Lady!" and "Get out of here!" in one breath. They both tried to push Jones out the door. But without his own cake and his coals he would not go. Besides he had not yet properly made his delivery.

Only the lady was not flustered. "That will do, Wilkins. You will help the lad to get his bundles together again. He says he brings me a Twelfth Night cake from Mr. Hubbs. Do we get our pastries from Mr. Hubbs?"

"I do not know, My Lady. I'll ask Cook and send the boy about his business."

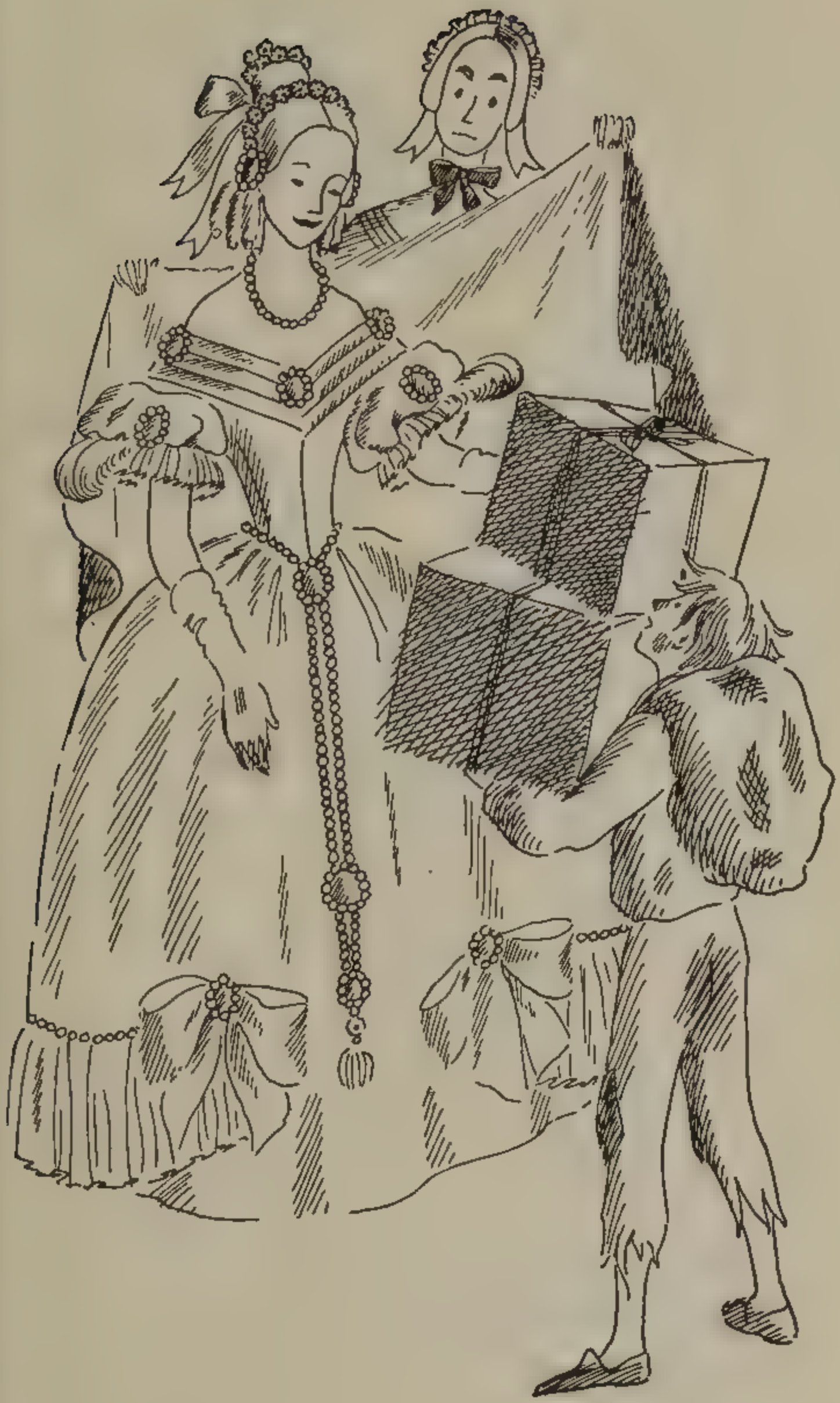
The Lady looked at Jones again. "You are blue from cold, child. Do you have to deliver another cake yet tonight?" She pointed to the other box on the floor.

"Oh, no, My Lady. That is my Twelfth Night Birthday Cake. I'm going to 'ave a party too—when I get 'ome."

"Well, the sooner you get there the less apt you are to take cold. Where do you live?"

"In Friday Street, My Lady. That is in Cheapside you know."

"I didn't. But Cheapside is a long way. It will take you more than an hour to walk. I think I have time to drop you there before I go on to the Palace. Now we must hurry.



Pritchard, my cloak." The maid put a soft warm cape about her shoulders.

"Wilkins, take the lad's bundles out for him to the coach. What is your name, child?"

"Jones, My Lady. But I shouldn't go in your grand coach. It isn't for the likes of me to ride with a great lady."

"Nonsense. You got chilled bringing me the cake. And you can tell me all about your birthday party."

Lady Sandwich was thoroughly enjoying her generous impulse but her servants were not.

Wilkins began, "I hardly think, My lady . . ."

"I know, Wilkins, but never mind. Just do as I say."

Wilkins said nothing more but the maid sniffed loudly as she followed Jones. The footman who held the carriage door open for them glared so ferociously that the boy was glad they were not meeting alone.

In the coach Jones sat across from Lady Sandwich and beside the maid who looked down her nose and moved as far as possible from him. The celadon green satin cushions were softer than anything that Jones had ever sat upon, and he wriggled about uneasily in embarrassment.

"Now tell me about your party."

Jones did.

All about the plans for the party. All about Mrs. Murrit and Mrs. Hawkins, and Alf and 'Enery and Artie and Willie. All about his plans to move to a garret. All about everything except his hope of living in Buckingham Palace. The minutes flew by and when he stopped to catch his breath they were already in Friday Street. He was

disappointed that he had no chance to ask even a single question about the Palace. Well, it could not be helped. Perhaps the lady wouldn't have told him about it anyway. She was a kind lady and he hoped to see her again some day—in Buckingham Palace.

Jones jumped out of the coach and bowed awkwardly.

"Thankee, my Lady. This ride was another birthday present for me. I am lucky today."

"Happy Birthday, Jones, and good-by. No, just a minute." She turned to her maid. "Pritchard, my reticule. Here now." She took out a half crown and handed it to him.

"Oh, but . . ." The carriage had driven on and Jones picked up the bundles flung down by the footman.

Chapter Four

JONES rushed up the stairs. His heart was still pounding like thunder in his ears when he knocked on Mrs. Murrit's door—then opened it.

His eager greetings died in his throat as he went into the room. No one was there. There was no fire. There was no party.

Life went black suddenly. Then he found a bit of paper nailed to the wall. On it was printed unevenly,

COME UPSTARES

Did this mean him? At any rate he would soon find out. He tried not to hope too hard while he climbed the one flight more of steep stairs that creaked under his light tread. As he went up carefully, there was a glimmer of light but no sound of the voices for which he listened.

Not until Jones' head appeared above the top step was

he aware that anyone waited for him. Then there was a great clamor of welcome from his friends who had been holding their breath in a hushed silence.

"'Appy Birthday, Jones!" loudly chorused Alf and 'Enery and even Artie's mouth was stretched in an unaccustomed grin.

Mrs. Murrit and Mrs. Hawkins were more restrained as befitted respectable women but they were nonetheless hearty in their good wishes for all that.

The pot-boy shouted, "All the best, Kid, and may yer . . ." but his boisterousness was frowned upon by Mrs. Murrit and at her "Now then, Willie Ketch . . ." he subsided into indistinct mumbling.

The younger Hawkinses were quite tongue-tied and as round-eyed with amazement as Jones himself. Certainly the appearance of the garret was well calculated to astonish the boy. He could hardly believe his eyes when he saw his own furnishings, left behind in the cellar that very morning, now tastefully arranged here with an air of permanence. The room itself was large and somewhat drafty but a welcome contrast to a frowsty basement. A charcoal fire glowed cheerily in a rusty brazier which 'Enery had gotten from a scavenger friend of his.

Stars reflected from the single candle gleamed in every pane of an enormous skylight and twinkled on certain bright objects that Jones was at a loss to identify.

Jones was no hobbledehoy in matters of politeness as a general rule but for the second time tonight no pretty phrases would come and he took refuge in questions.

"What are they?" he asked, pointing to the luster balls

covered with silvery cobwebs which hung from fir boughs laid along the beams. ". . . and these?" Looking further he saw birds with spun glass wings and gilded walnuts and gilly-flowers and carnations cut from colored papers.

Everyone accepted his questions as thanks enough and Mrs. Hawkins explained.

"They're ornaments that 'ang on the Christmas trees that are the fashion this year in the West End. It's a German custom, I'm told—and a pretty one I will say—that's been sent to England by that Prince Halbert who is to marry 'Er Majesty if all goes well, God bless 'er. They do say the Queen 'as a tree fifty feet 'igh with ever so many 'undreds of these gewgaws blinking on it in 'er palace."

"Oo-er! Would that be Buckingham Palace?" For just a minute Jones forgot all else.

Although their own social spheres were limited both Mrs. Hawkins and Mrs. Murrit were perfect fountainheads of information on all matters pertaining to royalty. From their gossip Jones had formed his ideas of the Palace —ideas that would have surprised the Lady Sandwich had she had time to hear them.

Mrs. Hawkins went on to explain how these trinkets of the idle rich had come to grace a Cheapside garret.

"My Mrs. Coombe left London today for foreign parts and said she 'ad no more use for these gauds and the branches too. Quite the lady she considers herself, I dare say, but she lacks a seemly feeling for customs. It don't seem right someway to take down your greens before Twelfth Night instead of burning them then for luck as all proper English do. 'Owever," she ended quite

cheerfully, "hit's han hill wind hand we're the ones to get the good."

Jones had had no chance to come by any Christmas greenery at the proper time but he felt glad that tonight they could burn these as was fitting, although he would be sorry to see them go so soon. The branches were fresh and beautiful in his sight where a more critical eye might have noted that they had already shed many of their needles and the remaining ones were turning yellowish.

Over and over Jones had to tell the story of his evening's adventures at Lady Sandwich's house and the ride home. To repeated questions, he told what Lady Sandwich said, what he said, what the manservant said, what the maid said, and what the coachman and footmen said. All but Lady Sandwich were properly booed by his loyal friends. The tale had an added glamor for his guests as well as for Jones because he had been brought home in style by the lady who was on her way to attend the Queen at Buckingham Palace.

The party was a merry one but everyone in the room with the exception of the littlest Hawkinses had worked hard all day. The matter of food loomed large in their minds as a consequence, so by common consent the festivities were declared to have reached the refreshment stage.

The table was pulled out from its corner and the fourth leg needed to keep it upright improvised from the lower part of a broken hatrack which Mrs. Murrit had saved against the day when a need for it would turn up. The formality of the occasion called for a tablecloth and Mrs. Hawkins unpinned Eliza's red shawl. Spread on the table

it gleamed richly in the candlelight. The need for chairs had been foreseen by Alf when Mrs. Murrit told him of her plan to remove Jones to a new home as a birthday surprise. Behind a fruiterer's he had found eight useful crates which served well. The three littlest Hawkinses didn't have chairs but they were disposed comfortably on unprotesting laps.

Everyone declared that this was a feast as was a feast! Baked 'tatoes and chestnuts there were in plenty. Even Artie had so far relented from his customary stern attitude in such matters as to provide a generous supply of winkles. These were eaten from their shells with shiny black-headed pins mysteriously plucked from the upper folds of Mrs. Murrit's decent black dress.

The charlady, whose mother had come from Cornwall, had prepared a favorite dish of that far country. "Thunder —and—Lightning" it was called and was made of cream and treacle zig-zagged over new bread in the form of forked lightning. The children raised such a clamor over this sweet that they had to be hushed sternly.

The high point of the party was, of course, Jones' Twelfth Night Birthday Cake. Despite its age and the several bumps it had gotten on the way home, they all said that they had never seen so fine a cake in their whole lives. When it was cut they declared that they had never smelled nor tasted so rich a one. It was heavy and black as was proper, and quantities of plums, currants, citron, almonds, butter and sugar, and orange and lemon peel had gone into its making as well as brandy and caraway comfits. Everybody ate too much for comfort and the children

were sure to have nightmares but their mother felt that it was all in a good cause.

Mrs. Murrit rose and rapped on the table for order.

"Ladies and Gentlemen! Give me your ears!"

"Wot for?" Willie wanted to know but Alf kicked him under the table and with one last "Ow!" he quieted.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, as I was saying when interrupted rudely—and see that it doesn't happen again—we are gathered here together to honor the birthday of a lad you all know and should respect. That he doesn't know when his birthday really is, is neither here nor there. If you don't have one, I always say go out and get one." Here Willie interrupted again but with " 'Ear! 'Ear!" which did not ill please Mrs. Murrit. "E—He—is a fair example of a person of mettle and enterprise combined with great good will toward all and a heart of gold which might be a lesson to us all"—her glance flickered meaningly toward Artie—"Let us rise together and drink his health and his great prosperity—and may all his dreams and wishes come true—in this potent libation 'ere—HERE—before us. Ladies and Gentlemen! I give you OUR JONES!"

"JONES!" They all shouted as they drank gustily the ale brought by the pot-boy.

Jones sat, shyly beaming at all these kind friends. They drank to his dreams coming true. Surely that meant Buckingham Palace this year!

Mrs. Hawkins rose. "Ladies and Gentlemen! I give you 'Er Majesty, the Queen! May God bless 'er!"

Right willingly they all drank this toast too—none more heartily than Jones.

The festivity kept up noisily until all the Hawkins children were asleep and their elders yawning widely, remembering that they must go to work in the early morning. Jones carefully detached each ornament from the boughs which he then ceremoniously laid upon the brazier. It wouldn't do not to take every precaution to be sure of luck.

Being dry, the evergreens burned brightly and quickly. Eyes began to water from the smoke that soon filled the room. Since there was no chimney, the skylight was opened to let it out and wraps were hastily put on against the cold air that rushed in.

With often repeated kindly wishes, Jones' guests took their leave. "Good Night!" and "'Appy Birthday!" echoed up the stairs and he was left to enjoy alone the exciting novelty of his new home.

Tired as he properly was after such a day, he was still much too excited to sleep. Climbing through the skylight, he jumped to the slippery slates on the roof of the next house, clutching wildly at the chimney pot to keep from falling. Far below in Cheapside the Watch called "Past eleven and a starlit night!" From this high perch the night sky seemed closer than he had ever seen it. Suddenly it made him feel quite small and lonely. With a turn of his head this chilly feeling passed for he was looking down into his own candle-lit room with deep satisfaction. It was his first home-with-a-window and he was justly proud of it. No one could live in a finer place, he thought, except perhaps the Queen in Buckingham Palace, and he wasn't even sure of that right now.

Chapter Five

HIS ambition to live in Buckingham Palace had come over Jones "all of a sudden like"—he always put it—one day when he was listening to Mrs. Murrit and Mrs. Hawkins gossiping about the glories of the new Queen's court.

"She's such a little thing to live in that great palace. All them rooms—'undreds of 'em, they do say—filled with so much grand furniture that it takes twenty butlers, forty footmen and seventy-two 'ousemaids to set the place to rights."

Mrs. Hawkins had a good head for numbers and being rather in the same line of work she was tremendously concerned with the housekeeping problems.

"The best cooks in all the kingdom are there too." Mrs. Murrit's business gave her a special interest in food. "I'm told on good authority that nightingales' tongues are

served regularly with some left over every time from Her Majesty's table."

"Yuss, and all them grand things you're talking of come out of the poor people's work. Hit's a crying shame, I say." Artie the gloomy had stopped at Mrs. Murrit's for a cup of coffee. He was sternly hushed by the two women who would brook no disloyalty to the Crown.

Jones listened all agog. Wonderful pictures were conjured up in his mind by their words. The last thing settled the matter for good and all.

"The Taj Mahal is there too done in alabaster." Mrs. Hawkins certainly came by some odd bits of information in her charring jobs about the West End.

Jones had once seen a picture of the Taj Mahal on a biscuit tin found in an alley. It was very grand and to see it at first hand would be wonderful. He was sure that they were talking of the real original one.

So started the ambition that made him different from all the other Joneses who led everyday sort of lives.

That had been almost two years ago when Queen Victoria first came to the throne. As time went on his resolution grew apace. First he wanted to see Buckingham Palace. Then he wanted to live there.

His first plans were so hazy that they belonged only in dreams. During every day he was kept busy earning his bit of food and having whatever fun offered.

As he grew taller and stronger Jones ran errands for the fishmonger and greengrocer who paid him as often as not in their wares. When it was fish—and he was very fond of

fish—he would gather up a few sticks, retire to one of the less frequented alleys, build himself a fire and there cook and eat his dinner. Most other foods he ate raw and always picnic fashion.

Many children in such circumstances would have found life hard. Not so Jones. He regarded his lot as a natural and a happy one. He was cheerful and resourceful and quite apt to pity wholeheartedly the well dressed children whom he saw in his ramblings through the fashionable streets of the West End. They seemed to him pathetic trapped creatures unable to escape from starched and capped nurses who gave them never a minute's peace.

It was always, "Come here instantly, Master James."

"Don't get your frock dirty now, Miss. Little ladies never behave so."

"Children, you must not speak to filthy street arabs. Whatever would your father say?"

And to him the voices of the Nannies were shriller as they cried, "Be off with you now."

But Jones could hold his ground with an impudent grin while their charges had to do as they were bidden. There was more satisfaction, he decided, in being poor and beholden to no one. While the other children were being led home, Jones went on up the Mall to the very gates of Buckingham Palace and peered through at the royal residence which he knew for a certainty would one day be his own.

Now that he was twelve—almost a man, Jones thought—it was high time that he make some plans to carry out

his ambition in life. Many he thought of and discarded as impractical, but all the time he was gaining knowledge that would stand him in good stead later.

On an icy morning in late January Jones went down New Pie Street, shivering and blowing on his fingers. Dirty, slushy snow had crept into his slit boots and numbed his toes. Just ahead, two children as ragged as himself disappeared through a stable doorway. On the chance that it might be warmer there, Jones went in the same way and found a new friend.

Inside, a number of children sat about on splintery benches or on the straw-strewn dirt floor. The room was huge and the tiled roof was without ceiling. To compete with the chilly draftiness an enormous iron stove glowed redly in a corner. As Jones sidled around toward the warmth, he noticed a plump young man fitted tightly behind a small desk. He stopped and stared, then grinned shyly as the young man smiled at him.

"A new pupil for my Ragged School? You had better come over here near the fire and take off those wet boots."

He sounded kindly and Jones did as he was bidden but he was not at all sure that he was a new pupil. He knew nothing about schools and so he was suspicious of them. It might be the sort of place where orphans were locked up and trained to be slaveys. He had had dire warnings of such places from Artie. The young man did not look as if he would take any unfair advantage of a boy for his smile was friendly and his voice not at all an ordering-about one.

"I'm Mr. Wilkins," he said now. "I shall teach you to read if you like."

Jones would like to read. This was an accomplishment of Mrs. Murrit's that he had particularly admired.

"Please, Sir, I would. That is if I don't have to stay in here always."

"Of course you won't have to stay. Classes are only for two hours every day. If you can be quiet that long you will be doing much better than any of the others."

"Then may I read now?" Jones was eager.

"Not so fast, my young friend. It is not so easy as all that. Here is a slate and I shall just write the letters on it and explain them to you. A slow beginning makes for a better scholar in the end."

Jones worked hard. He liked the school. He liked his work. Most especially he liked young Mr. Wilkins. The twenty-two-year-old master had expected most of his pupils to feel that way about learning but he had found little enthusiasm in the rest of the class. Many of them were the children of professional beggars, and beggars themselves from an early age. They found the pursuit of their traditional calling more interesting than anything Mr. Wilkins could teach them. They only came to school at all because the stable was a warmish place to spend the hours during the coldest weather. Jones turned out to be his one real scholar, so the teacher encouraged and helped him both in and out of school hours.

Soon Jones had learned to read tolerably well all the books provided and some loaned him by Mr. Wilkins. Two hours a day were not enough and he spent more and more time with the master. Then Mr. Wilkins took Jones with him when he went to visit his friend Mr. Rogers, a

bookseller whose shop was in St. Paul's Churchyard.

Jones poked about among the dusty shelves quite happily while the friends smoked and talked together. Much of their talk was about the orphan for Mr. Wilkins had become very fond of him. When the schoolmaster was ready to go, Mr. Rogers called Jones.

"I need someone to help me here, young man, cleaning the stock and the like. How would you like to work for me now and then?"

Jones' face lighted up. "I would, Sir, ever so—if I can read here too."

This was a spirit the bookseller could understand and sympathize with. "Then come in tomorrow at eight o'clock and be sure you're on time."

Jones was there waiting the next morning when Mr. Rogers came downstairs to take down the shutters. From the first they got on well together. Mr. Rogers paid tuppence for delivering a book to any part of London and fourpence for dusting the thousands upon his high shelves. In addition to his wages, Jones could read what he pleased and he was usually to be found perched atop a ladder with his nose deep in a book. When the work was urgent, Mr. Rogers called him, but mostly he just left him there to read.

"I 'ave book learning, I 'ave," Jones proudly informed anyone who would listen.

"And all very nice, I'm sure," Mrs. Hawkins would reply kindly. She would have said the same had he laid claim to noble birth or the lamp of Aladdin—so amiable was her regard for the boy.

Mrs. Murrit, accomplished woman that she was, was a great help to Jones in this, as in so many other ways.

"Wot good'll it ever do you?" Artie once asked. "I never 'ad any and never needed any. I sell my winkles to pay my way, exchange the weather and bits of news with people wot stop at my barrow, know enough figurin' not to get cheated—wot more is there to life? Except maybe in the way of pleasure, a drop of an evenin' with some mates in the pub. Those of us as is poor don't need the fancy learnin' the rich do. By rights they don't need it neither but it gives 'em a chance to show off like."

The first answer to this argument that sprang to Jones' lips was that no doubt learning would come in useful when he lived in the Palace and did not want to be shamed by his betters. It seemed wiser not to use this so he contented himself with the rather feeble reply that "Well, I like it. Really I do. It's ever so exciting to learn about men like Sir Richard Whittington who might be a lesson to us all."

Jones would have said that he liked facts better than fiction. He wanted to know real things. But the truth was that he could not tell the difference between them. Tales of unicorns seemed less improbable than the camelopard —with pictures—that he found in Mrs. Mary Trimmer's *Natural History of Quadrupeds, Adapted to the Capacity of Youth.*

The animal looked so absurd that he refused to accept him until he made a trip to the Surrey Zoological Gardens

across the river to test the author's truthfulness. There he found the camelopard—then he hardly believed his own eyes. That any creature should have so long a neck seemed quite outside the bounds of reason.

He spent a whole day at the Zoo—not missing his dinner at all in his excitement. Strange birds, especially the ones which swam, intrigued him most. They were even more wonderful than they had seemed in the natural history books. He spent hours hanging over the rails watching the Muscovy ducks with their gaudy plumage. He never tired of seeing them dive straight down after some tid-bit and then waggle their tails that were the only part still showing.

Only the monkeys made him uncomfortable though their antics were droll enough. There was one there that looked astonishingly like 'Enery and he did not like to think of any of his friends being caged up.

Back at Mr. Rogers', he read *Robinson Crusoe* but he thought the man's adventures a trifle less exciting than a trip through Buckingham Palace would be.

The people of Lilliput existed for him as actually as those he saw about London every day.

There were books of magic too that he came upon frequently. But Jones did not hold with magic unless it was a good practical sort which caused food to turn up when one was hungry or enabled a lad to disappear quietly when caught in an awkward situation.

In this manner his education progressed. It was a bit sketchy from some standards but eminently satisfactory

to him. There were no mathematics to be sure, but he had little need of any beyond what he learned early in the streets—the addition of certain coins such as tuppence and threepence ha'penny to make the total necessary for the purchase of some highly regarded article. By the time he was ten Jones could do any such sums up to a shilling. Beyond that lordly amount his imagination boggled.

Willie Ketch was Jones' best listener when the urge to show off was too great to resist. The pot-boy had neither the patience nor the industry of the student but he did have a lively curiosity and an enormous admiration for his friend's new knowledge.

Jones paraded his learning on the slightest excuse while it was still so new. Once as they were passing the Church of All Hallows Barking, Jones began, "I'll wager you don't know why the church is named that . . ."

"Named what?" asked Willie patiently. "Oh, that," he added as he noticed where he was. "No—I don't. It sounds pretty silly. Fancy a lot of saints standing around barking like the dogs in the streets."

This was Jones' chance. "Well you see it used to be Berkynge way back 'undreds of years ago. It . . ."

"Coo, ain't you a one!" Willie didn't even know that Jones had not finished. He had seen a hurdy-gurdy man farther down Mark Lane. Just then the street musician struck up "The British Grenadiers." Jones heard the tune too and forgot his scholarship. Without a word to each other the two boys raced down the Lane, singing at the top of their lungs.

"But of all the world's brave heroes, there's none that can
compare,
With a tow, row, row, row, row, to the British Grenadiers."

Whenever their employment allowed of free time together, the two boys wandered happily through the maze of London. They had similar tastes and nearly always saw eye to eye on what made for amusement and adventure.

Only his frequent excursions to peer through the rails at Buckingham Palace did Jones always make without Willie. He had thought of taking his companion with him on these trips but he was afraid that Willie would give away his secret plans. It would be such fun to confide this wild scheme to willing ears—but if Willie knew, then the chances were that all Cheapside would know.

Jones knew quite clearly just what Mrs. Murrit and Mrs. Hawkins would say. These good women prided themselves upon "knowing their place" and "keeping themselves to themselves." To them Jones' plan would be quite insane and, even more to the point, out of keeping with his station. They would worry too lest he get into trouble and they would be sure to mutter darkly that "No good would come of it."

One day in February Jones stopped at Mrs. Murrit's stall for a little chat before going on to the Palace. But for once, a more immediate bit of fun turned up. Bertie, a cabby, was having his usual afternoon cup of coffee. While drinking it, he remarked in muffled tones through his walrus mustache that the ice on St. James' water was strong enough to bear a man's weight, so it was.

Jones said good-by to Mrs. Murrit at once and hurried

to the Cat and Salutation to catch Willie on his time off. Together they raced to St. James' water. Here they skimmed about—without skates of course—enjoying themselves no end and getting in the way of everyone more suitably equipped for the sport.

When at last they tired of slithering around on the ice, they joined the spectators who lined the banks—critical of awkwardness, jeering gleefully at some hapless stumbler, but generous in their praise of feats of skill.

"Look now, Willie, at yon gentleman in the checkered pantaloons. 'Is fancy turns are that 'andsome you'd swear 'e 'ad never been shod other than with skates."

"Aye, you're right there, Jones, but the one in the cape ain't doin' so well. A bit on the portly side, 'e is, for cavortin' about. Most of 'em ain't what you'd call gifted."

Next day and for many days thereafter, Jones was back at Buckingham Palace. He walked all the way around the forty acres of palace grounds, seeking some means of entrance. He examined critically all the tall, impassive guards —trying to decide if any of them might be absent-minded, but there was no way to tell. While he had spied out the lay of the land until he knew every gate and path as well as he knew his own room, Jones still had not hit upon a feasible method of getting inside.

Chapter Six

Eaper, weaper, chimbley-sweeper,
Had a wife but couldn't keep 'er.
Had annover, didn't love 'er,
Up the chimbley he did shove 'er.

MAY-DAY—the holiday of the Chimney-sweepers. A heavy rain the night before had cleaned the streets of their usual egg and oyster shells, cabbage stalks, and bits of broken crockery. The sky looked newly washed and rinsed in the best bluing and the sun shone brightly between a few soft feather-bed clouds.

The Sweeps were coming now—a long straggly parade of them—cavorting foolishly. They were led by their traditional Jack-in-the-Green, a man entirely hidden in a framework of greenery with a Union Jack on the top. Next My Lord Chimney Sweeper and his Lady in plumes danced by.

Just for this one day every year, they discarded their sooty garments to put on whatever fantastic finery they could come by. Nothing curbed their high spirits today. Each one sang or danced, or jumped or pranced just as he pleased and the parade hadn't any semblance of order about it.

Several of the sweeps were carrying their tall black workaday hats for no other purpose than to fling them high in the air and catch them again as they came down. One hat went too high and was caught on a cluster of three brass balls overhanging a pawnbroker's shop. On went the owner with the procession with no thought for his lost headgear for his mind was upon the roast beef and plum pudding which kindly householders and their cooks were sure to send out when the parade passed well-to-do homes.

Jones wouldn't miss any sort of a parade and this was better than most. He was standing up on a barrel across the road from the pawnbroker's. Here now was his chance! He saw it at once and took it without further thought or delay.

For months he had been making elaborate plans for getting into Buckingham Palace, only to discard each one as his logical mind found some serious flaw in it. Here was the perfect scheme, made to order for him and with the means at hand to carry it out. Of course he would go to the royal residence disguised as a chimney sweeper's boy.

Jones wasted no time. As soon as the merrymakers had passed on to a safe distance, he retrieved the hat and hur-

ried home with his prize. Caution bade him wait until the next morning before proceeding farther for the Palace officials and lackeys would be sure to know that May-Day was the chimney sweepers' holiday. He was so excited that he could not sleep that night and he was up and about with the first glimmer of dawn.

The merest suspicion of added soot and grime applied to his clothes and person served as a perfect disguise. When he put on the tall hat and picked up a burlap sack that he would use as a soot-bag, no one would have doubted for an instant that he was one of the Sweepers' boys so often seen in the streets.

With even less trouble than he had foreseen, Jones went into the grounds by the North Gate. He had expected to be challenged by the guard and had prepared his story about meeting his master within.

"Please, Sir, I 'ad to go back for me sack. My master said I should meet 'im in the Palace kitchens where 'e's doin' the flues."

"Then you'd better be about it." The man paid scant attention to the grimy child, for in just a few minutes now the Guard was to be changed and he was making plans for the afternoon when he would be out of barracks.

Once in the grounds, Jones hurried for shelter among the mulberry trees that were dropping their tiny blossoms to make a carpet underfoot. No one had noticed him. Still keeping under the trees as much as possible, he went over to inspect the ornamental lake. The grass was well tended, the reeds on the bank tidy and not too lush. And here were Muscovy ducks like those he had admired at the Zoologi-

cal Gardens. He viewed the whole with a proprietary eye and wished that he had brought crumbs for the ducks. Perhaps there would be some in the Palace kitchens which he could feed them later.

It was unseasonably warm for so early in May, and Jones was now in no great haste to get indoors. Keeping a careful watch out for any gardener who might ask awkward questions, he looked in at the royal stables. Thirty-two sleek horses—black, chestnut, bay, and dappled gray—watched Jones as he passed their stalls. One whinnied gently when he rubbed a velvety nose. This was gratifying but it did sound terribly loud.

He went on quickly and opened the door into another part of the mews, where he found two stable boys dawdling before a fire. They held bits of gear in their laps and there was saddle soap in the straw at their feet but they made little pretense of working. They looked up abruptly as Jones came in, but relaxed at once when they saw only another child of their own years.

"Oi, there, you chimney sweep! 'Ow does it feel to climb up into a flue?"

There was nothing alarming in this. Jones had never been up a flue but he gave a vivid account of the sooty blackness endured in the pursuit of his supposed duties. He ended with an item of information that he had picked up somewhere and forgotten until now.

"And in the chimney you can see the stars by daylight as ever so."

"Go on, now!" They weren't sure that they believed him but they were friendly enough and Jones was

able to ask questions that were to prove valuable to him.

"Where are the grooms now?"

" 'Ow many servants are there in the Palace?"

"Where are the kitchens? Who keeps track of the food?"

"Who tells the servants what to do?"

One of the stable boys looked at Jones in wonder. "Coo, you are a one for asking, ain't you?"

This was unpromising but the other lad was brighter and liked to show off his knowledge. From him Jones had his first inkling of the domestic confusion which was to prove so helpful during his visit. The chatty child could, and often did, gabble on for hours. Mostly no one paid any attention to him. As an eager listener Jones proved himself a rare treat.

"Well, you see," he began, "it's somewhat this way. Nobody doesn't properly know whether they're 'ere nor there as you might say. There's the Lord Chamberlain. Then again, there's the Lord Steward."

"Who're they?" asked Jones.

"Oi, they're swells what don't live 'ere."

"Then 'ow do they come into it at all?"

"They come in more than you'd think, mate. The 'ousekeeper—don't never meet 'er if you don't want trouble—she takes 'er orders from the Lord Chamberlain. Then she proper tells off the 'ousemaids and pages. Then there's the Clerk of the Kitchens—Old 'Igh and Mighty we calls 'im—all the cooks and porters and scullery maids 'ave to serve 'im."

"It all sounds very mixed up," agreed Jones.

"But that's nothin' to 'ow mixed up it all is before you're done with it. 'Im as 'as charge of the stables 'ere—Master of the 'Orse—'e's the bloke what orders about the footmen and the livery porters and the under-butlers. And don't ask me what a Master of the 'Orse 'as to do with under-butlers. Then there's Woods and Forests—another bloke what 'as to look after the outside, like the windows. Course, the inside of windows is somebody else. Old Woods and Forests and whoever is inside never get together about anything and the windows are that grimy, they do say the Queen 'as to spit on 'er finger and wipe off a spot if she wants to look out. Or maybe one of 'er Ladies-in-Waiting does it for 'er."

Jones was sure now that the stable boy was exaggerating dreadfully. But even if you only believed half of it, it could only be expected that in such circumstances the service would be dreadfully bad. The stable boy didn't put it this way, of course. To him the fact that the servants could be absent for as long as they liked almost was a matter to rejoice about. Jones congratulated him the more heartily on this happy state for in the middle of so much confusion his own presence in the palace was less likely to excite comment.

"Only two days ago, they do say," the stable boy was still chattering, "a scullery maid was frightened 'alf out of 'er wits when she met the French Ambassador in the dark 'all next the kitchens. 'E'd lost 'is way and no one there to show 'im it." The boys giggled.

Jones refused to be taken in by this tall tale. "No, go on, I don't believe it."

"Honest, it's so. I 'eard the groom tell it, and 'e 'ad it straight from the porter who's keeping company with the scullery maid." This seemed conclusive, even to Jones.

Before he left them, the boys took him to see the State Coach in which Her Majesty had ridden to Westminster Abbey to be crowned. Jones had had only a glimpse of it then for he was not able to get near the procession but now he examined closely the glass and the gold scrolls and the golden lion and unicorn. As he peered inside, one of the boys said, "Get in and sit down—do. We often sit there when no one isn't about."

Jones looked at the pale satin upholstery and then at his grimy clothes and decided to postpone this treat until he was a bit cleaner.

"It's a wonder— That it is." He told the others.

"Yuss, it's all right. But you should 'ave seed it the day the Queen was crowned. There's plumes as is plumes to it, but they're put away now against the moth."

An hour had passed quickly for the make-believe chimney sweep and he left his new friends with his outlook considerably brightened.

Chapter Seven

JONES slipped into the Palace through a small door that led to a perfect maze of back passages. He might easily have been lost in the corridors if he had not wisely trusted to his own nose. Guided by savory odors, it led him unerringly to the kitchens.

The mid-day meal was over, both in the royal dining room and in the servants' hall. Scullery maids were cleaning up the remains and dishes. Jones found that he was ravenously hungry. It was no effort for him to assume a wistful expression when he caught the eye of an apple-cheeked maid whose cheerful appearance promised an amiable nature.

"Well and who may you be?" she asked him.

"I've lost me master, so I 'ave. Not lost 'im exactly—more to say mislaid 'im. 'E is cleaning flues upstairs and I can't find the room again. And my dinner is up there too."

"You poor little lamb. Go sit on that stool over there in the corner and I'll cut you a nice bit off the joint."

She brought bread and meat and a mug of milk. "Eat them quickly now before Mrs. Cook comes in and finds you 'ere."

Jones thanked her kindly. As he ate, he stared at the ovens and hot-plates and the great open grate and the roasting-jack. Not so long ago the roasting-jack had been turned by a spit dog, but now it was turned by a fan wheel in the chimney, driven by the rising smoke. The fire was still smoldering just enough to keep it revolving and the boy was sure that here was a miracle before his very eyes.

Jones gobbled his food and washed it down with large gulps of milk. When he could catch his breath again he said, "That was rare good, it was. Didn't 'Er Majesty enjoy it too?"

"Lord love you, dearie—I don't know. 'Ow should I? I've never even seen the Queen so I can't tell you if she liked 'er roast beef."

"Are you just come to the Palace lately too then?"

"Been 'ere four years come Michaelmas," replied the maid. "But Mrs. Cook is as near royalty as I want to come, I can tell you. Gives 'erself such airs she does, I should 'ate to 'ave to see anyone grander. Me little brother Perce —'e's the knife-boy 'ere—'e could tell you the same thing. She leads 'im such a life, she does, that 'e always wants to run away to sea. If she keeps on I'll let 'im go too."

"Then if you've never seen anyone grander than Mrs. Cook, it wasn't you that met the French Ambassador in the 'all."

"Oi, yes, it were. But after all is said and done 'Is Excellence or whatever they call 'im is French. It makes a difference."

"Where's that dratted girl? By now the kitchen should be clean and everything in the scullery and put away."

The shrill voice and the girl's frightened look announced the approach of Mrs. Cook. The maid snatched the mug and pointed to another door through which Jones scurried just in time.

The boy spent the afternoon wandering about from one room to another upstairs and down. His progress only depended on the absence of servants and he found it easy enough to elude them most of the time.

In the stately White Drawing Room the deep-piled carpets made his bare feet tickle pleasantly. He had never walked on a rug before and it was fun to trace out with his great toe the rose-colored flowers that grew on it so riotously against a pale green background.

Chancing to look up, the heavy crystal chandelier held him spellbound. With his mouth like an O, he began to count the candles in their crystal sconces—one—two—three—up to nineteen. Then he had to stop and think what number came next and while he was thinking, he caught sight of a dark, scowling face in the huge mirror over the mantle. As the reflected figure moved, Jones moved too—and hurriedly—toward the cold fireplace. He was squinting up the flue with a professional air before the man—an under-butler with exalted ideas of his own authority—could ask his question.

"Who told you to come in 'ere, young one? Filthy brats should not be loose about 'Er Majesty's Palace."

Jones resented both words and tone but diplomatically he gave a soft enough answer.

"My master said this chimney was to be swept, Sir, and for me to wait right 'ere until 'e comes back. I'm but carrying out 'is orders. In my line of work you'd get dirty too."

"Look sharp then. See that you get into no mischief and be out of the palace as soon as your work is done."

"Yes sir," said Jones but he stuck out his tongue at the pompous plum-colored back as soon as the man turned to leave.

He wanted to go on counting the candles in the center chandelier and in the four other slightly smaller ones but he thought it would be just like the under-butler to come snooping back.

Staying close to the walls in the hall, he explored further. He tried the door of the Throne Room but found it locked and went on to a Blue Drawing Room where the pale tufted satin upholstery caught his eye. Forgetting his dirty clothes he bounced up and down on the soft comfortable chairs under the very eyes of a full length portrait of the Queen in her coronation robes. Then he was shocked to find on the blue satin dark smudges left by the seat of his sooty trousers.

Just then he heard footsteps in the hall. Not wanting to be caught here with the evidence all against him, he slid behind the brocaded velvet window curtain that hung to the floor. It was tied back for the day with heavy gold

tasseled cords but the window embrasure was so deep and the curtain so full that he could sit down quite out of sight.

For a little while he peered out through a slit at the gold-encrusted ceiling with its border of ladies in classical draperies, plump cupids flying above their heads and a strange looking gentleman playing on some pipes. Jones was baffled. He had never seen anything of this sort before—not even in Mr. Rogers' books. Presently he closed his eyes for just a minute and when he opened them the figures were moving strangely. He tried to watch them to make sure and settled back more comfortably to do it. Twice more he opened his eyes, then closed them and leaned his head back against the woodwork.

When he woke up from his nap, the shadows were much longer. He listened carefully before coming out of his hiding place. It would be awkward to be found so late in the day still disguised as a chimney sweeper. It was as important now to get rid of his tall hat as it had been earlier to keep it on. He tiptoed to the door and into the dining room beyond, then to the fireplace there. He thrust his hat up the flue, pushing it high with a long fire-iron. Twice it fell down again when he stopped poking, bringing with it a shower of soot.

"It doesn't look as if this chimney had been cleaned for months," Jones disapproved of such laxity as he pushed the hat up for the third time. He was successful at last, for it caught on the inner shelf where the chimney breast narrowed.

Jones was reminded again of the condition of his

clothes and person when he saw the sooty grime he had left about when he touched anything. From the dining room he went on upstairs in search of a place to wash up.

Down broad corridors he tiptoed, listening cautiously outside the rooms for sounds of activity within. No doubt some of the bedrooms were empty but he could not decide to risk looking, particularly since he did not know which was the Queen's bed-chamber. A shiver ran down his spine at the mere thought of invading the royal privacy.

On the next floor were the rooms of the Ladies of the Household and the Gentlemen of the Household. From the animated hum which reached his ears, he guessed that everyone was dressing for dinner and the evening. As he reached the end of the hall, he heard a door click behind him. He turned quickly and caught a glimpse of Lady Sandwich crossing from one bedroom to another. She had not seen him so he hurried on. This seemed neither the time nor the place to renew their pleasant acquaintance.

He climbed higher until he reached the servants' quarters. At this hour they were quite empty for the entire staff was busy as at no other time during the day. The first two rooms that he looked into obviously belonged to female servants—but the third was used by some of the footmen. It was overcrowded with beds for twelve and frightfully untidy. Garments were strewn upon the cots and on the floor quite impartially. Jones wondered how any young man could pick his own clothes out of such a melee.

"Now I can get as clean as anyone in the Palace," said Jones to himself optimistically as he caught sight of the

unaccustomed luxury of a bit of soap on the wash-hand stand beside a large ewer of water. He undressed and washed quickly. Then he decided that nothing could be done to improve the state of his own rags.

Bare and shivering, he began to hunt about for some clothes that would nearly fit. One after another he tried gold-braided waistcoats and small clothes intended for large-sized footmen. Finally he put on a pair of knee breeches that hung baggily on his slight frame. By taking a tuck in the waist band with a pin he could just barely keep them on. Next came a white shirt. Its starched neckcloth was crumpled but it seemed incredibly fine to Jones.

Under a chair he found some stockings and discovered that the fine footmanly calves that he had so admired came from a judicious padding sewn into the hose. He put them on and sat for several minutes just admiring his legs.

The shoes scattered about the room were of varying sizes—none small enough for him—but so shiny were their buckles that he must wear a pair at any cost. When he tried to walk in them the clatter he made was so loud that it seemed as though the cost would be instant discovery. He could not bear to give them up, but his good sense prompted him to take them off and carry them when he wanted to move quietly.

Jones looked curiously at a pair of tongs used to curl the footmanly sideburns but, for the life of him, he could not decide what they were. He put them down reluctantly and picked up a comb to tidy his hair. He didn't have such a thing at home but he had seen a comb before.

Before leaving the room, he rolled his own filthy garments into a tight ball and thrust them out the small window. They dropped to a narrow ornamental balustrade where they were quite safe from discovery.

Jones went down stairs again and into a sitting room, less formal than the one in which he had napped. The sofas and chairs, equally soft and tufted, were built on a smaller scale and had an intimate elegance that the others lacked. The pattern in the rug was more colorfully gay and there were vases of fresh flowers and family portraits. One of the pictures Jones recognized as the late King. He was surprised for he had heard from Mrs. Hawkins that the young Queen had not liked her royal uncle, but he supposed that family feeling and all . . .

The mantel was crowded with fascinating objects. An ormolu clock under glass was flanked on either side by a Dresden china shepherd and shepherdess. Two Nubian figures struggled to hold up candle sconces with a good deal more strain and effort than their weight would seem to warrant. Across the room Jones tried the little rosewood spinet with a tentative finger and was enchanted by the clear note that resulted. He would never have dared touch the grand piano which he had glimpsed that afternoon in a music room.

Presently he heard people coming and he retired behind the drawn crimson curtains which hid him even better than had the others earlier in the day. There was a good deal of movement in the room and when he peeked out he saw grand Ladies and Gentlemen of the court standing about stiffly and uncomfortably. Lady Sandwich

was rearranging her head-dress at a mirror and a much younger lady seemed to be searching frantically for something among her flounces.

At last the poor little Lady gave up. "Oh, dear, I've lost my handkerchief. Lady Sandwich, can you lend me one?"

"Impossible, Jane dear. I have a cold myself as I always do nowadays that the dining room is so drafty."

"But what shall I do?" wailed the Lady Jane. "Her Majesty will be furious if I sniffle."

"I'm sorry, my dear. Just stand behind me and try not to be noticed. I do hope the Queen won't keep us too long this evening. My poor feet get so tired with all this standing about in the presence."

"S-s-h-h. They're coming." The whisper rustled through the room. Ladies and gentlemen quickly formed themselves into a half circle with Lady Jane somewhat behind. They all stood at court attention while the Queen and Her Prince Consort came in. Her Majesty was carrying a curly-eared spaniel and set him down gently in the most comfortable chair while Lady Sandwich sighed. "Now, Dash, you must just sit there and be very good," said his royal mistress.

The small talk was dull and Jones could not follow it. After a while it seemed to bore even the Queen for she asked one of her Ladies to sing for them. After a few suggestions the Queen agreed to hear a Lullaby.

Peaceful slumbering on the ocean,
Seamen fear no danger nigh;
The winds and waves in gentle motion

Soothe them with their lullaby.
Lullaby, lullaby,
Lullaby, lullaby,
Soothe them with their lullaby.

The long-drawn lullabies went on and on with many a pause between the words, and between yawns Jones worried about poor Lady Sandwich's feet. Once when the lady singer stopped for effect a loud and ill-timed sniff was heard clearly.

At last the Queen dismissed her Court. The Ladies curtsied themselves out thankfully and the Gentlemen bowed stiffly. When they had left a still-childish voice said rather wistfully: "You know Albert dear, when first I was Queen I used to be quite extravagantly merry. Often the Court danced until dawn."

"Yes, *Weibchen*, I know; but we don't do that any more, do we? It isn't quite becoming a reigning monarch." The voice was rather priggish.

"I'm sure you are right, dear Albert, you always are. But it was gay. Will you play something for me now?"

The tall, pale young man and his pretty wife played and sang simple German songs for almost an hour, only interrupted now and then by sharp yelps from Dash. The spaniel knew that there was a stranger in the room, but neither of the others believed a word he barked, and just hushed him. It was lucky for Jones that Dash was a good dog. If he had not been well-trained to sit where he had been told to stay, he would have been sure to find Jones behind the curtain.

Chapter Eight

JONES was ravenously hungry again. In spite of the excitement of watching the royal couple almost within reach of his hand, he could hardly wait for the household and servants to retire for the night. At last all was quiet and he tiptoed downstairs, still carrying his buckled shoes.

Fortunately the domestic economy, which was later to prevail through the efforts of the Prince Consort, had not yet been introduced into the Palace and candles were left carelessly to burn out in most of the rooms throughout the night.

His sound instincts where food was concerned served Jones well again. He found his way without too much trouble through the winding corridors to the pantries. Even the pantries had high vaulted ceilings and large fireplaces. Jones chose the one which seemed most fully stocked and blew up the coals in the grate to a cheerful blaze before he set about getting his supper.

Provender there was in such plenty that it was hard for him to choose. He sampled bits of roast guinea hen, finnan haddie, haggis, jugged hare, and a ragout before deciding, like the good Londoner he was, to make his meal of bubblé-and-squeak—a savory mixture of beef and fried cabbage. It was cold, of course, but nonetheless good for all that. He took his plate to a massive table and sat on one of the heavy benches that were still drawn up to it.

Dessert was a simple matter. As soon as he saw it he knew that he would top off his dinner with suet pudding and treacle. But he was feeling a bit languorous when he reached the sweet, having sampled so many dishes and having eaten so generous a helping of bubble-and-squeak. Leaning his head on one hand, elbow on table, he made a model of Buckingham Palace in the pudding, then poured the thick treacle into it and watched it run slowly out the doors and windows.

He finished his meal at last, full and happy, but not a bit sleepy. So he cast about for something more to do. A lean, gray cat had been watching him mistrustfully for several minutes.

"Here, Puss, Puss, Puss—nice Kitty." He coaxed softly and put down on the flagged floor such a variety of fish that he spoiled any chance of her being a good mouser that night.

He left the cat purring like a tea kettle while he explored the other pantries, the scullery, the strong room, and the back hall. In the hall there were rows of bells, each with a name and number painted beneath. It would have been fun to ring them all but he saw that it would

never do. Beside there was something else that was even more fun here.

A miniature railway ran along the floor to the coal house, with trucks on which the coal was brought in the early morning to be loaded into scuttles and carried to the rooms. Such an arrangement was a great convenience for during the winter well over two tons of coal were used every day and still the halls and most of the rooms were apt to be piercingly cold.

Jones rode back and forth in one of the trucks, getting coal dust all over his clothes. When he tired of the journey and went on to the front halls he was almost as dirty as the chimney sweep hours ago.

He had his first glimpse of the Grand Staircase for he had not dared to venture out here during the day. This staircase had awed many of Jones' elders, far more used to splendor than he. From the landing there were really two staircases, descending in dignified curves on either side. The balusters were great scrolls of gold fretwork and the handrail was a lovely smooth mahogany.

Jones' eye brightened when he saw it and the magnificent possibilities it offered for entertainment. During the next two hours he walked up and down it haughtily, conversing with imaginary dignitaries at his side. Then he ran up and down, taking first two—then three—of the shallow steps at a stride. As a fitting climax he slid down the banisters under the stern gaze of dead and gone royalty whose portraits lined the walls.

At last he went to bed under a sofa in still another sitting room and dreamed that a huge dragon was standing

over him, snuffling with fiery breath down his neck. Jones didn't like it and he was telling the monster sternly to hold his breath when he woke up. He found himself actually looking at scaly paws with long fierce talons. It took him several minutes to realize that they were the clawed feet of the sofa. Laughing at himself shakily, he went back to sleep and did not dream at all for the rest of the night.

Chapter Nine

FOR several days, life continued much in this fashion for Jones with never a dull moment. Then again he overheard a conversation between Lady Sandwich and the Lady Jane. They were discussing Her Majesty's mood which they found less than amiable at meal times. Jones peeked out at them from beneath the floor-length covering of the table under which he was hiding.

"After all," the little Lady Jane was saying, "we can't expect Her Majesty to be entirely cheerful when she can think of nothing but the cold. These last three days have been so rainy and chill. Why can't there be a fire in the dining room? Is the fireplace out of order? Why not have it repaired?"

"It has nothing to do with the fireplace," replied the Lady Sandwich. "Haven't you heard of the battle that is being waged over the matter?"

"No. Do tell me. What battle? How exciting!" The Lady Jane was very young for her position but so, for that matter, was the Queen.

"Well, the Lord Steward lays the fire in the dining room and the Lord Chamberlain is supposed to light it —or at least that is the way everyone thought the matter was ordered. But there is a disagreement as to precedence and the underlings of Old Toddles' and the Steward cannot come to an accommodation. So . . ."

"You mean the Queen cannot have a fire with her meals until it is settled?"

"Quite. Her Majesty must eat in the cold. And so must we." The Lady Sandwich, having been longer at Court, accepted it as inevitable.

Not so Jones. He resolved to see to it that Her Majesty had a fire in her dining room. When opportunity offered, he gathered kindling from other fireplaces, and logs, and carefully laid them ready to be lighted. He rather prided himself upon his success with fires which came from long experience in many dark alleys of the East End.

That night, just before the dinner hour, he watched his chance when the room was deserted for a few minutes. Taking one of the candles already burning, he set the kindling alight. Almost at once black smoke puffed out into his face. With a horrid sinking somewhere in his middle, Jones remembered that his hat was still up the chimney. He poked frantically with a poker until the hat fell on the logs and burst into flame. Then he hid only just in time.

The folding doors were opened. The Gentlemen of the

Household bowed stiffly and the Ladies curtsied as the Queen passed into the room ahead of them.

As she took her place at the head of the table, Her Majesty saw the blaze. "We *are* pleased to have a fire," she said and the meal progressed more cheerfully than had any in a long time.

However the pleasure was limited strictly to the Queen, Her Household, and Jones. Below stairs the feud which had been smoldering broke out with a vengeance. Each department accused another of having usurped their traditional rights.

"Were they freeborn Englishmen—or weren't they?"

Each denied having anything to do with the matter. Under-butlers no longer played chess of an evening with porters. Pages no longer kissed scullery maids in the halls. Two housemaids broke off their engagements to marry two of the handsomest footmen.

All this resentment led to a perfect fury of activity among the staffs who could no longer really enjoy just being lazy. Jones wasn't safe for a minute, what with angrily muttering servants looking for cobwebs and even dusting under beds and sofas. When a broom handle poked him sharply in the ribs as he stood behind a drapery, he decided it was time to leave.

With every intention of returning as soon as the excitement had died down, Jones slipped out of the Palace, looked back just once to admire how perfectly the beds of geraniums matched the scarlet coats of the guards, and went back to his quiet attic.

Chapter Ten

FOR almost a week after he came back to Cheapside, Jones kept the secret of his adventure—but each day it was harder to do. He felt that he would burst if he didn't tell it all to someone. Then came Sunday and Willie to find amusement with his friend, since on the Sabbath there was no work at the Cat and Salutation.

"Whatever ails you, Jones?" asked Willie as the boys walked out together. "You're as fidgety as a cat on 'ot cobblestones."

"If you promise true never to breathe a word to anyone, I'll tell you."

"I promise all right, but get on with it—do now." Willie was feeling the contagion of Jones' excitement.

Without further preamble, Jones told the whole story of his expedition to the Palace. When he had finished Willie could not hide his disappointment.

"Oi, it's just another one of your tales. Not but what it's a good one. 'Ow you think 'em up I don't know, really I don't. But expectin' me to believe 'em—that don't go. It used to be these 'ere unicorns and camelopards and such unlikely beasts. Now it's livin' in Buckingham Palace with the Queen, you are. Why, I've never even been to see the guards there and I'll wager you've not neither."

Jones' indignation at his friend's disbelief was swallowed up in amazement.

"What! You've never seen the outside of the Palace? Don't you ever go explorin' when you're not with me?"

Glancing up at the Church spire of St. Mary-le-Bow just then, Jones had an idea. The sun was high enough in the heavens to have caught the weather-vane—a fierce copper dragon gleaming wickedly in the brilliant light. More than two hundred feet in the air, the beast was nine feet long and on each spread wing was a gilt cross.

"You come with me and I'll show you the Palace," he began tentatively. "We could probably see all over England if we got up on 'is back."

Willie's gaze had followed Jones' and he was blinking because the brightness dazzled his eyes.

"Don't you be mad entirely," he replied. "We could never do it and I, for one, wouldn't try."

Telling Jones that he couldn't do something never did any good. Now he became set in a determination to prove that the idea was perfectly sound, although he had not really meant it at first.

"I'll give you," he took a deep breath and plunged recklessly— "I'll give you a shilling if you do it."

At the Cat and Salutation Willie earned three-and-six a week for long hours of washing up beer mugs and scrubbing floors. A wager entailing a shilling was not to be lightly disregarded. With misgivings and a thumping heart, he agreed to follow Jones' lead.

Once inside Bow Church the boys climbed the three steep stories that brought them to the belfry stage. Looking down from this height made Willie dizzy, looking up at the dragon above made him dizzier, so he closed his eyes and clung to Jones' ragged jacket for dear life.

Jones could not climb with this handicap so he had to stop and deliver a sharp lecture, pointing out against his own reason that there was neither difficulty nor danger in what they were doing. And he made eloquent mention of the purchasing power of the shilling.

It was the last argument which carried the most weight, and presently they were both climbing over the cornice and balustrade above the belfry. Still higher and just under the weathervane were twelve Corinthian columns and the newel. The boys were thin enough to wiggle through these and they scrambled breathlessly up onto the back of the dragon. For a measure of safety, they each slid out onto one of the spread wings where the crosses gave them something solid to hold to. And they *held* on.

After a few minutes their first nervousness wore off and they were able to look about them. While it would be too much to say that they could see all over England as Jones had predicted, still their view certainly covered all of London even to the green fields surrounding Camden Town and the low hills of Surrey across the river.

The Houses of Parliament, and Westminster Abbey, and St. Paul's and the Tower all stood out from lesser buildings and were imposing even from this height. The traffic on the bridges—Waterloo, Blackfriars, and London—could barely be seen by their sharp blue eyes and many of the narrower streets quite disappeared. Carriages and lorries below looked like creeping beetles and the pedestrians were but the tiniest ants.

"There's Buckingham Palace." True to his word Jones had spotted it. Jones let go of the cross to point out the Queen's residence set in its forty acres of pleasure grounds. "Some of the mulberry trees set out by King James the First are still growing there, around the lake. That King thought it would be good for the silk industry to have a mulberry garden right in London." Jones was always quoting from authors who could put a matter more pithily than he.

At any other time Willie might have asked what mulberry trees had to do with silk, but now he interrupted the animated monologue on the beauties and merits of Buckingham Palace.

" 'Ave you thought Jones, 'ow we're goin' to get down from 'ere? I'm feelin' quite faint and the sun shows long past my dinner time."

"Oh, we'll get down as we came up, no doubt," replied Jones. Then he looked below and lost all faith in his own words. The hand with which he had pointed out the sights hastily clutched again at the cross. They could not get down without grave danger of broken necks, a distressing prospect not to be confided to the more

timorous Willie lest he fall off his perch from sheer fright.

As Jones was wondering just what it would be best to do, and finding no inspiration, suddenly the dragon rocked and the whole tower seemed to sway, as all ten Bow Bells were rung beneath them. The noise was deafening. Jones just wanted to shut his eyes tighter and hang on but he had to look after Willie. White and shaking the pot-boy clung feverishly to his cross and Jones tried to make reassuring faces at him for no shouted words could be heard above the din.

After several minutes the bells stopped ringing and Jones thought that he had surely gone deaf. Looking down again, he noticed that a crowd had gathered in the street below. They were milling about excitedly, watching the boys and shouting words of encouragement and advice that were lost on the summer air long before they reached their ears.

It seemed a lifetime to the boys and was probably all of an hour before assistance arrived. Jones thought a song might cheer Willie so he began appropriately enough:

> Children of Cheape, hold you all still,
> For you shall 'ave Bow Bells rung at your will.

His efforts to encourage Willie met with little success though the boy was holding still right enough. He looked just about ready to burst into loud wails that would have disgraced them both.

Then two heads appeared below on the belfry stage. The children brightened up at once and called down loud greetings to their rescuers.

"Just keep a good steady 'old on that there dragon till we figure this out," shouted one of the men and the boys would not have thought of disobeying him.

There followed much discussion of ways and means. Another helpful person arrived with a fishing net found drying on St. Katherine's dock, but this proved useless since there was no place to hold it spread out.

A rope was finally decided upon. After some delay one was located and thrown high in the air for Jones to catch. He missed it five times before he was able to grasp it as it flew past his face. Once caught, it was a fairly simple matter for him to knot it tightly and securely about the dragon's neck. First Willie and then Jones slid down without harm but with a good deal of wear and tear on their nerves.

Never in their lives had either of the boys noticed how wonderful was the feeling of solid ground under their feet, but they appreciated it fully now. When they reached the street, they faced a friendly but scolding crowd—all of whom told them what fools they were in no uncertain terms.

Mrs. Hawkins summed up the general feeling when she pushed her way through to them.

"You 'aven't a brain between you, playing the giddy goats like that," said said fiercely. "But do come right on 'ome with me and get some 'ot food into your stomachs."

Chapter Eleven

WHAT with one thing and another Jones did not get back to Buckingham Palace for several months.

On a Wednesday morning early in June he met Willie, with long face and gloomy scowl, dawdling about and idly kicking an empty crate down Breadloaf Alley. Something must be seriously wrong he was sure for at such an hour the pot-boy should have been busily washing up last night's mugs and sweeping out the tavern for the day's trade.

Jones was curious and he did hate to see his friends in low spirits but he was too tactful to ask questions. If Willie was in trouble he would tell him about it no doubt all in good time.

"Do you want to see something really wonderful today?" he asked in an effort to cheer the gloomy boy.

"Sure, don't mind if I do," replied Willie without any

marked enthusiasm. "So long as it ain't your old Buckingham Palace from the top of Big Ben or the Tower. You don't catch me doin' that again were it ever so."

"Not the Palace this time," Jones agreed cheerfully. "Come along now, do."

The children walked rapidly from street to street while Jones chattered away about more wonders of natural history—some to be found at the Zoo and some only in Mr. Rogers' books. Willie didn't say much but it never occurred to Jones that he might not be paying any attention at all. An occasional "Coo-lummy" of amazement was all that Jones ever expected from his friend when he was parading his learning.

After they had gone more than two miles Willie began to lag behind. Finally he stopped. "Where are we off to, Jones?" he asked. "It had better be uncommon wonderful when we get there 'cause my feet 'urts somethin' cruel."

"We're just about there now. This 'ere is the corner of Baker Street and Madame Tussaud has just moved 'er wax works to new quarters 'ere." Jones tried to sound casual but he did hope that Willie realized that this was something pretty special.

Willie did. Even he had heard extraordinary tales of the shivery amusements provided for her clients by the good woman.

"Coo—that would be first rate if we could get in. But we ain't got no money. It ain't free now, is it?"

"Of course it's not free. Probably wouldn't be much

good if it was. But 'ere's 'ow we'll get in. Listen close now." Jones went on to outline his plans.

At first Willie looked very doubtful—then he grinned. "You are a one, Jones, and no mistaking. You 'ave ideas for everything. Sometimes wish I did—but it must be wearing to use your mind so much."

This was the kind of whole-hearted praise that Jones lapped up like a kitten with a saucer of milk. It made getting in to the Waxworks an even better game for him. By now they were at the foot of the few steps leading to the entrance. An old door-keeper in a tattered uniform left over from Waterloo was nodding in a chair. Almost asleep but not quite. Jones went up to him.

"Oh, Sir, you're a soldier, ain't you?"

The man had not been in the army these many years but he got up out of his chair heavily and drew himself up an extra two inches in his dirty shabby uniform.

"That I be, boy. When me and the Iron Duke now were at Waterloo . . .

"An' I says to the Duke, says I—if them Frenchies be comin', you'd better count on me. I 'ave plans . . .

" 'You're quite right Dick Bludgeon,' says 'e, 'when it comes to strategy there's no one like you. What this army would be without you I couldn't say—really I couldn't. And so I shall tell the King when we get back to England.' 'E said all that, did the Iron Duke, true as I'm 'ere."

While Dick Bludgeon was deep in the story of his own brave exploits in the battle and his own wily strategy that saved the day for England, Willie slipped by with-

out notice. Once inside, he went through the halls and upstairs quietly. He peeked into several rooms without finding what he wanted but came at last to figures of knights in armor. He knocked one of them over with a noise that sounded as if all the pots and pans in London were being thrown around by a giant cook in a rage.

Jones had been waiting for just such a clatter but the old soldier had not. Reluctantly he broke off his tale and went to investigate it, telling Jones to wait right there and he would hear more about what the Duke said when all seemed lost but for Dick Bludgeon.

It had been a good enough story but Jones did not wait. He walked in boldly while the man was gone and in a very few minutes he and Willie met as they had planned in the Chamber of Horrors.

Neither boy liked this room but neither wanted to admit to the other that he was afraid. It might be all very well to look at horrors when there were crowds of other people about but it was still early in the day and there was no one but themselves in the huge dimly lit room. The nightmarishly grinning faces of murderers and thieves and traitors got on Jones' nerves as he looked about. He moved closer to Willie then he noticed that his friend's eyes were tightly shut. He nudged Willie's arm and the boy jumped a good six inches.

"Well, we've seen all these now," said Jones in matter-of-fact tones. "Shall we go on to the other rooms?"

Willie went with him thankfully and they wandered about, only avoiding the room where clankings and heavy

groans gave warning that Dick Bludgeon was still struggling with the awkward armor.

In one room there were the old street criers of an earlier London. So real was the image of the Caller Herrin' man—and so like Artie was he that Jones could almost hear him crying "Cockles, . . . and mussels, . . . Alive . . . Alive O" just as his friend croaked in the early evening "Winkles fresh from the sea!" But the Lavender Girl and Cherry Ripe and the man with Old Chairs to Mend were street people and street people were what Jones and Willie saw and talked with every day. They wanted something out of the ordinary for their trip here so they passed on.

A whole room full of personages from the French Court of different periods enchanted Jones. He had read about these people and here they were—almost alive and moving. He began eagerly to explain them to Willie who sighed and wondered whether this was fun or lessons.

The scenes from English history that did not have to be explained to him pleased Willie better, especially those in which there was plenty of action. The Guy Fawkes plot was good and Queen Elizabeth at the head of her troops and the Navy sailing out to meet the Spanish Armada with the Ark Royal leading the fleet. Dick Whittington was there twice—once as the lonely orphan with his cat and again as Sir Richard Whittington, thrice Lord Mayor of London in robes and heavy gold chains of office.

When all was quiet they went back to see the suits of

armor, and climbed up, opened visors and peered inside. "Should think that stuff would make a bloke stiff in the joints," said Willie and even Jones couldn't see how any warrior could have been agile in such cumbersome gear.

At last they had seen everything and they were tired and hungry. Leaving, they passed the door-keeper quite openly and Jones said kindly, "Good-day, Colonel."

At the "Colonel" the old soldier saluted smartly and they were down the steps before he really noticed who had passed.

"Oi! there! Wot's all this?" he shouted. He started to give chase, then wisely decided to save his legs and went puffing back to his chair.

Slowly they wandered back to Cheapside. Jones was in no hurry but Willie seemed not to want ever to arrive home. Finally Jones just had to ask what bothered his friend.

Willie brightened somewhat. "I was wondering whether you weren't never goin' to notice. I ain't got no job no more.".

He didn't have to add that he had no money either for Jones would know that without being told.

"Whatever 'appened, Willie? Did you cheek old Nosey?"

"No—wish I 'ad now. 'Is wife's sister sent her boy up to stay with 'im and he said he wasn't goin' to keep no young hellion in idleness. 'E gives 'im my place and out I goes without so much as a by-your-leave."

"Well, it's not as bad as it might be." At this point Willie thought that Jones' cheerfulness could get to be

annoying. Then he could hardly believe his ears. "You can come and live with me, you know."

"Not really—can I?" Willie was afraid to believe it. Jones' attic had seemed to him the height of luxury ever since the birthday party. He had no family and at the Cat and Salutation he had slept as comfortably as he could on one of the tables.

Jones, of course, had no family either. On the whole, he considered this state definitely a good one for no one could rightly interfere with his comings and goings. But once in a while he had day-dreamed of having someone really belonging to him. In such dreams it was never the family that looked after Jones but Jones who took care of little brothers and sisters and sometimes even a mother and charming but ne'er-do-well father. To be sure Willie was two years older than he but he was the kind of person who would put up with quite a lot of looking-after and even like it.

Jones did not suggest that Willie go back to the Cat and Salutation to get his clothes for he was wearing them. Instead he mentioned a kipper and some green cheese that awaited them in the garret.

"Then why don't we hurry?" Willie the laggard was off down the cobbled street at such a pace that Jones panted to keep up with him.

The new household worked out quite well. As Jones had foreseen Willie did take a good bit of looking-after. He was quite ready to help Jones on any of his jobs—but Jones had to find them first. As Jones was enterprising

there was soon enough work for them both and so there was plenty of food and time for amusement as well.

Only at one point did Willie balk at any of Jones' ideas. That was when Jones thought it would be nice if Willie would go to school and learn to read.

"I won't! I won't!" shouted Willie in as near a temper tantrum as his rather sluggish nature could come.

Jones was disappointed but he never did believe in forcing anyone to go his way. "All right, then, if you feel that way, we'll just say no more about it. I just thought it would be nice for you."

"Nice!" snorted Willie, but he was glad to let the matter drop.

Looking after Willie and having fun with him took up most of Jones' time and the weeks and months went by quickly enough.

There was a bleak day late in November when all the bells in all the church towers in London rang loudly and joyfully and the streets buzzed with excitement. Jones went to call on Mrs. Murrit, sure that he would hear all the news. He was right, Mrs. Murrit did know all about it.

"It's a little Princess Royal that's been born to Her Majesty, God bless them both. Here, Jones, let us drink their healths in our coffee. A long life to them both. God save the Queen! God bless the little Princess!" They both drained the cups.

In the streets patriotic citizens were congratulating each other and all talking about the royal baby. As loyal a subject of Her Britannic Majesty as was to be found in

all the kingdom Jones was suddenly homesick for the Palace. He felt that he must just go back to see the Royal Infant.

But there was Willie. What was he to do about him while he would be away? He went on to St. Paul's Churchyard to see Mr. Rogers, for whom he still worked two or three days every week. The shop was closed and the shutters up in honor of the occasion but Jones rapped noisily and soon Mr. Rogers shuffled downstairs in his carpet slippers to let him in.

"What brings you here? I made sure that you would be out merrymaking on this happy day."

"Yes, Sir, I was. But I am 'aving a spot of trouble with a problem that 'as come up so I came to see you."

"Quite rightly. Come upstairs."

In Mr. Rogers' cozy sitting room, over bread and butter and a dish of tea, Jones explained that he had to go away for a few days. Like the tactful man he was, Mr. Rogers did not insist upon knowing where Jones was going, a matter which he considered to be only Jones' business.

"If it is your work here that you are worrying about, you may be sure that I shall manage and your place will be kept for you."

"Well, Sir, it is rather that. Only not quite. You see, it's Willie. What to do about 'im while I'm gone—'im not being so good like at getting jobs for 'imself. I was wonderin' if 'e might take my place, so to speak, while I'm away."

"I think that might be managed." Mr. Rogers had

heard something of Willie these past few months. "Tell your friend to come around in the morning."

Jones hesitated. "There's just one thing, Sir—and thank you. You see Willie 'e can't read. 'E's not what you might call educated."

Mr. Rogers smiled. "Well then, we shall just keep him here to dust the books while you are on your holiday. If all the stock is clean when you return you will have just that much more time to read."

"You think of everything, don't you, Sir? Now I'll just go and tell Willie and perhaps take 'im about a bit this afternoon by way of a special treat."

Jones found Willie back home waiting for him. He too had discovered that there was no business going on today. "Well, Jones, what to do?"

"Let's just go out and see what 'appens." Off they went together. Regardless of the mud and slosh, all the streets were crowded with merry people and the boys found plenty of fun. At the dockyard they found that a good English dinner of roast beef and suet pudding was being served in the Queen's honor to the workmen. It was not difficult to join them and get their share of the treat.

By evening the weather cleared and Jones and Willie went to the West End to see the fireworks and illuminations. The government offices, the mansions of Her Majesty's ministers and those of the foreign ambassadors were lighted up. So too were the clubs, the homes, and shops of tradespeople by appointment and even many of the homes of private and patriotic citizens.

In Hyde Park the fireworks amazed Willie. There were

shooting stars of red and yellow, blue and purple which burst in the air and drifted slowly downward. In a handsome set piece the Union Jack was surmounted by the royal crown.

Willie decided that he would like to have a position by appointment to set off fireworks on all occasions for celebration. He was still talking about it when they curled up in their quilts for the night. His voice came drowsier and drowsier to Jones' ears.

"Willie, listen, I want to tell you something." Jones was insistent. "Tomorrow I am going back to Buckingham Palace, and . . ."

"Oh, Jones, don't tell me that tale again tonight. I'm too sleepy and it isn't true anyway."

"But it is true."

"Go on with you."

"Well, just remember, when I don't come 'ome, you're to go and work for Mr. Rogers in my place. Don't forget now, will you?"

"No, but I still don't believe one word of . . ." Willie was asleep. Soon Jones was dreaming too of the Palace and the Queen and Lady Sandwich.

Chapter Twelve

BEFORE dawn, Jones crept out on tiptoes without waking Willie. He was anxious to reach Buckingham Palace by sunrise and he had to run a good part of the way to do it. While the early morning Guard was being changed Jones slipped in again through the North Gate. He could not go in through the back halls to the kitchens for he was sure that there were servants about lighting fires and preparing breakfasts.

The gray walls looked unpromising but Jones was a good climber and near the corners some of the stones jutted out to make an ornamentation. He scaled from one to another of these until he reached a second-story window which was open. First peering in to make sure that the room was empty, he crawled through and was once more pitting his wits against the Palace attendants.

He knew now which was the Queen's bedchamber and

could not have mistaken it anyway for nurses and domestics and sleepy-looking Ladies-in-waiting bustled back and forth. Watching his chance, when a door was left open and no one was about he went into the small but elegant anteroom which adjoined the royal bedchamber. Here he found a costly sofa, tufted and brocaded in green and gold, which had been ordered expressly for the accomodation of all the royal and illustrious visitors who would call to pay their respects to the new princess. A heavy corded fringe made it another grand place to hide so he crawled underneath. Having had to get up this morning long before his usual time, Jones napped for several hours.

Once he woke up and heard a gentleman asking after Her Majesty.

"Doing nicely, Sir. Her Majesty has had a good night and is well rested." The important tone that he heard in this voice made Jones sure that this was the head nurse, as indeed it was.

"Very gratifying," replied the gentleman. "Nurse, would it be asking too much—would you let me have just one peek at Her little Royal Highness?"

Jones hoped the nurse would say yes, for he might be able to see the baby too.

"Certainly not, Sir!" The head nurse was scandalized. "Even Sir Robert Peel would not dare come until visiting hours."

"Oh, ah—I'm sorry, Nurse . . ."

"I should think so indeed, Sir. And now you must excuse me for I have to go to Her Majesty." They both went out and no one came again until two o'clock.

Promptly at the correct hour the Prime Minister arrived to ask after Her Majesty. It was evident that he found more favor with the crisp nurse.

"Her Majesty is doing splendidly, Sir Robert. If you wish to see Her Royal Highness I can bring her in just a few minutes. Won't you wait?"

The sofa creaked above Jones as Sir Robert Peel sat down. He had not long to wait. First came a nursemaid to open the door, then two other nurses looking respectful and finally the head nurse carrying Her Royal Highness on a pillow.

Everyone was so intent on the baby that Jones felt quite safe in peeking out. All he could see were long lacy robes falling from the pillow and then two tiny red fists beat the air and Her Royal Highness Victoria Adelaide Mary Louisa wailed and screamed. Jones was amazed that so tiny a creature could make such a noise and said to himself, "It's odd that the Royal Baby squalls just like the littlest Hawkins used to." He had expected something more dignified from this infant or perhaps more regal tones.

Sir Robert and the nurses seemed to find nothing amiss however. The stern head nurse positively cooed, "There, there, and are we cross?" Sir Robert soon left.

The royal infant having proved a disappointment, Jones set about to amuse himself much as he had on his previous visit. The anteroom was nearly always empty except during the afternoon visiting hours, so he kept it as his own apartment and from there sallied forth for food or entertainment.

The high point of this second expedition came one night when Jones sat on the Throne. He had tried the door with little hope of success for the Throne Room was nearly always kept locked except on state occasions. To his surprise it opened at his touch. Huge and impressive it looked to him, even empty and lit feebly by the flickering candle that Jones carried in his hand.

He walked down the length of the room and was just about to sit on the Throne when there popped into his mind one of those odd bits of information that Willie often found so trying. Only last week he had read in one of Mr. Rogers' dictionaries:

"Lese-majesty—An offense against the dignity of the sovereign or the state."

Would a commoner from Cheapside be considered guilty of such a crime if he sat upon the Throne? It presented a pretty problem for him to ponder.

After a good deal of thought he went and got an embroidered table cover from *his* own room. This he draped over the Throne in such a fashion that his person did not touch the Queen's chair. He felt that this covered the situation as well as the Throne and it completely satisfied his conscience.

Just sitting on the Throne holding a candle proved a dull business after the first novelty wore off, even when he pretended that the candle was a scepter and that he was holding Court. It was too hard to keep his mind upon the solemnity of it all, while the flickering light picked out the gold fringe on the heavy crimson draperies above the dais and was caught faintly again in the mirrors above the

mantels at either side of the room. He began to feel rather sorry for kings and queens who had to do this sort of thing regularly as part of their jobs. He would much rather be himself and just live in the Palace with no responsibilities. A pool of light shone on the highly polished parquet floor just down the three steps at his feet. It did look lovely and slippery.

Jones tipped the candle, let a little pool of beeswax drip on the top step of the dais, then fastened the candle firmly into it. With a few running steps he started and slid away into the long shadows as smoothly as he ever did on the ice at St. James'. Up and down the long room, two hundred feet if it were an inch, he skimmed over the floor.

The mythological figures in the high frieze just below the ceiling had doubtless looked down at many a gorgeous assemblage but they had never before watched such fun in this august room.

Jones stopped at last from sheer exhaustion. It had been well after midnight when he went to the Throne Room and now it must be nearly dawn. He picked up his candle, threw the table cover over his arm and returned down the empty halls and up the stairs to his own room. He put the cover back exactly as he had found it, then went out again and silently down to the pantries. He was famished after all his exercise.

After a hearty breakfast, he stood on a stool to put back on its shelf a jar of gooseberry jam. As he reached up a voice behind him said, "Lord love us."

Jones jumped and down went the jam pot crashing onto the tile floor. He turned and saw facing him from

the doorway the apple-cheeked maid who had been so kind to him on his first visit. Beside her was a tousled, sleepy child very little older than himself.

The maid giggled. "Well I never! And where might you 'ave mislaid your master this time—in our jam closet?"

Jones grinned back at her. "I'm not a chimney sweep this time. More visitor like."

"Visitor is it? I'll wager them above stairs don't know you're 'ere. Nor them below stairs neither, if it comes to that. Except me now and Perce 'ere."

"Oh, is this your brother? 'Im that wants to go to sea?" Jones could have said nothing more calculated to win Perce as a stanch ally than this mention of the sea. The boy accepted him at once as one of the right kind and began to tell him all his plans for a sea-faring life—if his sister would only let him go.

"Well, Perce," his sister interrupted, "you're beginning to wear me down about the matter. I 'ear nothin' when I'm with you mornin', noon, or night but the sea."

"But why are you and Perce up so early?" asked Jones. "It ain't sun-up yet for an hour."

"It's that Mrs. Cook," replied the maid. "She said last night as 'ow I 'adn't scrubbed this floor good enough for 'er 'ighness and so I was to come down before the others this mornin' and do it over. Not but what it can stand a scrub now." She viewed the blobs of jam and broken crockery. "Perce 'ere, 'e said as 'ow 'e'd get up and 'elp me and I'm blessed if 'e didn't. 'E's not so bad a lad some ways when 'e ain't carryin' on about the sea."

"I'll 'elp too," said Jones eagerly. The three of them

made short work of the task, then sat down to talk some more. As it became lighter the maid began to get nervous.

"You'd better get 'id some place before Mrs. Cook comes."

"All right. I'll just go back to bed. I live in the room next the Queen."

" 'Eaven protect us!" said the maid piously.

Perce thought Jones a boy after his own heart and was just beginning to say so when his sister interrupted him again.

"You, Perce, see that you keep a tight mouth today. Your tongue's on 'inges and we don't want to get the little lad in trouble."

"Course we don't," said Perce stoutly, "I'll be mum as you'd never know me."

Footsteps could be heard on the back stairs as Jones turned and sped up the Grand Staircase.

The very next night it happened. His luck suddenly deserted Jones. Quite early in the evening, Jones was under the sofa with a bedtime snack that he had filched from the kitchen.

The servants were still as slipshod as ever and hadn't swept under the sofa since it had been installed there several weeks before. This had suited Jones well enough but now the thick dust was his undoing.

A bit of gray fluff got up his nose and he sneezed—and sneezed again. My Lady Sandwich was with the Queen and no one was supposed to be in the room next door.

At a royal command, My Lady sent a page to find out

who was there. The liveried lad saw nobody and was about to go back and report the room empty when Jones could not hold his breath any longer. He sneezed again loudly.

The page was as frightened as Jones. He yelled for help which was immediately forthcoming in the persons of three footmen and an under-butler. The same grim under-butler whom Jones had heartily disliked before. The four men hauled Jones from his hiding place. They were nervous too for they expected at least an armed assassin. It made them all the angrier to be given such a fright by an insignificant young Cockney. The under-butler was perfectly furious for he had been the most terrified of all.

He grasped Jones firmly by the back of the neck and was shaking him in his rage when Lady Sandwich came out of the royal bedchamber to ask about the disturbance.

"This guttersnipe was under the sofa 'ere, My Lady. All quite comfortable with a pillow for 'is 'ead and good roast beef between two pieces of bread."

"What my late father-in-law started when he invented the sandwich," murmured the high-born lady. "But it's Jones! Whatever are you doing here? You had better tell me all about it."

So sympathetic was My Lady's manner that Jones found himself telling the whole story of both visits to the Palace. She laughed delightedly at his description of lighting the dining room fire, for she well remembered the incident. When he told of sitting on the Throne carefully covered by a tablecloth, she agreed solemnly that this device did indeed change the whole aspect of the case and no disrespect to Her Majesty could rightly be claimed.

Jones ended his recital by asking solicitously after her ladyship's feet.

All this time the servants had stood listening with scowling faces. Not one of them believed a word of it. Lady Sandwich ordered the men to release Jones and go about their business with no word to anyone of the matter. The under-butler, however, nastily refused to let his prisoner go, declaring firmly:

" 'E is a suspicious character, My Lady, and it's an unlikely tale 'e's told you, if you'll pardon my saying so. If you won't let me turn 'im over to the police as is only proper, I shall 'ave to report the matter to Prince Albert."

Lady Sandwich admitted defeat reluctantly. She knew —none better—that the Prince Consort had an exaggerated respect for the laws of his adopted country and little, if any, imagination. She smiled encouragement at Jones and told him that it would not be so bad, whatever would happen next—but she looked quite miserable when the street urchin was hurried out of sight.

Chapter Thirteen

THE next day as soon as the court opened Jones was tried by a judge in a very large wig and formidable black robes. The white curled wig should have given the man a benevolent expression, Jones thought, for the old white-haired people he had known in Cheapside had been for the most part philosophical and able to see a joke when it was presented to them. But His Honor did not look amiable but impatiently cross as if he had been interrupted in something he would much rather be doing.

The charge was stated as breaking and entering. This, Jones thought definitely unfair. He was quite ready to admit the entering part of it, but he had broken nothing—being as careful and tidy in Buckingham Palace as if it were really his own home.

He looked around the gray dingy vaulted room for a friendly face but only found rows of curious and bored

ones staring at him. The under-butler, full of his own importance, was there to give evidence. He sneered nastily and openly at Jones, well satisfied that he had paid the boy out for the fright he had given him. Jones did not know, of course, that the under-butler had told Lady Sandwich the wrong hour for the trial to keep her away but he did not like the man anyway. He stuck his tongue out at him and made rude noises until the bailiff turned him around forcibly to face the Judge.

Within a few minutes after his name had been called by the Clerk of the Court, Jones was ordered to stand to hear the Judge pronounce sentence.

"Jones, you have been found guilty on a charge of breaking and entering the Royal Palace. We hereby sentence you to four months' imprisonment in the House of Correction at Cold-Bath Fields, in the hope that you may come to see the error of your ways. This sentence is a lighter one than you deserve, but in view of your youth, clemency has been extended to you. See that you appreciate it by amending your way of life when you are free again."

"Yes, Sir," said Jones, "but . . ." He wanted to explain about the breaking but His Honor was in a hurry to get the morning's cases over and dismiss the court.

"Next case!" said the Judge.

"Silence!" roared the Clerk of the Court.

A warder tapped Jones on the arm and beckoned him to follow.

Jones was taken to prison in the police van drawn by two white horses. The ride through the London streets

and out into the more sparsely settled suburbs made him feel uncommonly important. He tried looking out of the back door of the van, then went up to the small square hole through which he could talk to the policeman who was driving.

"Where are we now?" he asked to start conversation. He knew very well where he was.

The policeman—one of Sir Robert Peel's new peelers —was young and curious too. He had never been inside Buckingham Palace and never expected to be but he did want to know what it was like.

"Will you be good if I let you out of there to sit up on the box with me?" asked the policeman for conversation between them now was somewhat difficult.

"To be sure I will be good, Sir!" So for the rest of the trip Jones sat beside the young policeman—not at all like a prisoner but rather like a friend who might just have been given a lift. In return he told the whole story of the Palace and described minutely the Drawing Rooms, the Grand Staircase, the Throne Room, and for good measure Her Majesty and the Princess Royal.

When they were within sight of the prison, Jones had to get back into the van and arrive properly in the custody of his policeman.

In the prison yard the policeman sent for the Keeper. While they were waiting he gave Jones a great deal of good advice about doing as he was told. "Nothing very bad will ever happen you unless you go out of your way to look for it. Be civil to a jailer and chances are he'll be civil to you. We're all human after all," he finished.

The Keeper arrived and took Jones in charge. Such was the child's faith in human nature and in his own ability to wheedle himself into the good graces of his betters that he did not worry greatly over the prospect before him. He smiled trustfully at the Keeper who seemed somewhat surprised and then smiled too.

To be sure there were abuses prevalent in the prisons of that time. They were usually the result of ignorance and stupidity and sometimes dishonesty in the keepers and turnkeys. When, and it happened with a cheering frequency, the Keeper was a man of some education and enlightened views, he could do much to brighten the lot of the inmates in his care.

In one side of the prison the debtors lived. Their poor arithmetic and eternally hopeful natures had led them into the extravagances that finally robbed them of their liberty. They were not forced to associate with the criminals and they were visited often, sometimes daily, by their wives and children—even by aunts and cousins who brought hot foods and changes of linen.

At this time, Mr. Martin—the Keeper of Cold-Bath Fields—was a man of parts. He was honest and genuinely fond of people, and he was exceedingly popular with his charges for he had added a yard for them to walk in and a racquet court. He saw to it that those who had trades were allowed to work at them and that pay for their work was faithfully given.

Mr. Martin and Jones got on well together from that first smile. The Keeper saw to it that the boy was not lodged with thieves and forgers but placed him at first

with the debtors. He was allowed some measure of freedom and given odd jobs for which he was paid more generously than he had been by certain of his employers when he was at liberty.

Before a week was out Lady Sandwich visited the prison, bringing Jones a great hamper of cakes and fruits. She was happy to see him looking as perky as ever and told him so.

"I am so glad to know that you got on all right, Jones, and I see that you did. If it hadn't been for that miserable pipsqueak of an under-butler I should have been in court to plead for you. He told me the trial was set for afternoon."

" 'E did? The low scum, wait till I get . . ."

"I quite agree with all you say, Jones, but you mustn't shout so or the Keeper will think that I am in danger."

"I'm sorry, My Lady. I do hope I didn't frighten you."

"Of course not, Jones. Can you imagine my ever being afraid of you. Why we've been friends for a year now."

"So we 'ave, My Lady, and thank you for putting it that way." My friend Lady Sandwich would sound grand to say casually when he was back home.

"Is the baby well?" asked Jones.

"The baby? Oh, the little Princess. Yes, she's thriving, the dear. But she already has a mind of her own, just like her mother. I must go now, Jones, because I want to have a talk with your Mr. Martin before I leave the grounds. Will you show me his office?"

"Yes, My Lady." Jones proudly walked with his elegant friend across the prison yard watched by all the inmates.

He said good-by to her at the office door and went back to his duties.

Whether or not it was due to Lady Sandwich's influence, the next day Jones was moved into the Keeper's own house where he was taught the first rudiments of being a good servant. He had a tidy nature and he liked polishing brasses until they gleamed so he did very well in his work. Mrs. Martin was pleased with him and insisted that she would miss him greatly when he was free again.

The Press of the Day made quite a to-do over the Boy Jones, as they always referred to him. There had recently been a good deal of public indignation aroused by reports of incompetence and extravagance at the Palace. The fact that a child had been able to live there undiscovered for days seemed to prove that the point at issue had at least some basis in fact. Jones' escapades dominated the newspapers for several weeks and it was through them that the news reached his friends in Cheapside.

The cabby Bertie had a great respect for Mrs. Murrit's eloquent phrases and her education, so he brought her a copy of the London *Times* which he had found in his hansom cab. She was the only person he knew who could read it.

Mrs. Murrit was touched by this small attention and she began to read while Bertie drank his coffee noisily. As always when any of the public prints came into her hands, she turned first to the Court Circular, noting with a generous pleasure the doings of royalty and aristocracy and the continued good health of the little Princess.

Then she turned to the news of the day and the first article to catch her eye was under the headline "The Boy Jones." She read far enough to be sure that it was indeed the child whom she always thought of as *her* Jones.

Her loudly indignant exclamation "Well, I never! How dared they when the poor lamb never did harm to a living soul!" made Bertie choke on his coffee. When he stopped coughing and wiped his eyes on his frayed sleeve, Mrs. Murrit explained the matter briefly. Then she took off her apron, folded it neatly, and tied under her chin the bonnet with jet bugles that had served her faithfully, rain or shine, for fifteen years.

"If you are finished your coffee, I'll just thank you to take your leave so I can lock up and be off." Mrs. Murrit thought the man very dense not to have taken the hint before this.

"What! Lock up in the middle of the day! Whatever for?"

"I must hie me to Cold-Bath Fields, of course, to see the poor little orphan. That is if they will let me inside the grim portals and they 'ad better, 'E'll, HE'll, think none of us care anything for him." Mrs. Murrit sniffed when she said it and her eyes were suspiciously damp.

"Well if ye must go, ye must I suppose and there's no more to be said about it. I'll drive ye out there and not charge a ha'penny. What's more, I'll wait and bring ye back." He finished handsomely and waited for appreciation.

He was not disappointed for Mrs. Murrit thanked him

in some of her very Sunday-best phrases. They set off together, only stopping at her rooms to gather up all the food in the larder.

Arrived at the House of Correction, they asked to see the Boy Jones and a turnkey went across the yard to the Keeper's house to tell the lad that he had visitors. Jones rushed into the room and in an excess of emotion Mrs. Murrit threw her arms about him and hugged him fiercely and cried all at once.

"Are they treating you with fiendish cruelty?" asked his friend whose only information about prisons came from reading horrible tales in the penny dreadfuls and hearing the highly-colored stories of ex-convicts who hoped to build up enough sympathy to wheedle free coffee and buns from her.

"Not at all." Jones was cheerful. "Nothing dreadful 'as 'appened and I'm earning real shillings doing chores and errands and learning to be a good servant too." He thought of telling her about the Lady Sandwich but decided to wait until he was back home for that. It would take a lot of detail to make anyone believe so unlikely a story as that gentry were coming to visit him here.

"Then you should be spanked, that you should." Now that she was sure he was not suffering bodily harm, Mrs. Murrit went on to deliver a sharp lecture on the error of his ways. "No good could come of such doings," she declared stoutly. Jones listened meekly for he was as fond of the old woman as she was of him and they understood each other well.

"Where's Willie and 'ow is 'e gettin' on?" he asked

presently. "You know I sort of adopted 'im as family and I worry about 'im."

"Willie is doing very well," Mrs. Murrit replied. "He works for your pleasant bookseller gentleman and often comes to see me. His main worry has been about you. He comes every day to know if I have heard anything about you. He seems to think that he adopted you. I shall tell him that you are doing as well as may be expected—and I'll see that he gets enough to eat."

Presently they parted after Jones had thanked her for the food she had brought him. He did not mention that he was getting all he could eat at the Keeper's house for he was sure that other less fortunate prisoners would enjoy the treat.

The boy promised to return straight home to Cheapside at once upon being released and in turn Mrs. Murrit promised him a homecoming celebration that would rival his Twelfth-Night Birthday party.

Chapter Fourteen

MRS. MURRIT was as good as her word and the party that celebrated Jones' release was a huge success.

Alf and 'Enery, with some idea of putting Jones at his ease, declared stoutly that getting in a spot of trouble with the police was a thing that could happen anyone.

Artie with his customary gloom, which he was sure the events had justified, went them one step further. "It's a thing that DOES 'appen to anyone that chances to be born in sound of Bow Bells. The rich 'ave the police on their side and they work together to get the poor man down. Every time, mark me words!"

"Nonsense, Artie. You're a born fool." Mrs. Murrit and Mrs. Hawkins both disapproved of such seditious words.

In spite of this uncheerful note, the party went on

enjoyably. They all ate more than was good for them of fish and chips and baked potatoes and chestnuts.

Willie was there too, of course, having already noisily welcomed Jones home. He had been lonely and didn't mind admitting as much. Sure now that Jones' story of life at the Palace was true, he was quite ready to believe all the others about unicorns and the like. His admiration for his friend's adventurous spirit knew no bounds. Although he was sure that no such glamorous fate would ever overtake him, he wanted to hear it all over and over again in the greatest detail. Especially the part about the Lady Sandwich whom he took to calling "my friend's ladyship friend."

Mrs. Murrit and Mrs. Hawkins listened just as raptly as Willie, though they clucked disapprovingly at such foolhardiness. But their curiosity was much too strong to let them drop the subject.

"Is it true that the 'ousemaids 'ave to climb up 'undred foot ladders to dust the ceilings?" Mrs. Hawkins shivered at the idea of such hazards in her own line of work.

"If they dusted them they would, but I never saw anyone doin' it. 'Tis a cryin' shame the way they don't take care of all that gold and jewels and all." Jones felt strongly that his Palace—and the Queen's of course—should be kept shining. Besides he remembered that the dust was the cause of his own downfall.

"And what may Her Majesty choose for breakfast, did you hear, Jones?" Mrs. Murrit could not hold out. This was a golden opportunity to add to her store of knowledge about the life of her sovereign and the household.

"Did I 'ear? I was there!" Jones described in detail all the foods he had seen and sampled, even ones he did not know the names of. Nightingales' tongues were there, he felt sure, though tricked out that fancy that he couldn't recognize them.

The little Hawkinses were round-eyed with wonder and envy. This was the boy who used to play with them and now he was a hero and had even gotten into the papers, they'd heard their mother say.

Jones paused at last from sheer lack of breath and Willie jumped up with a mug of ale in his hand.

"A toast to our Jones! Let's all drink up 'is 'ealth now!"

"First a toast to the Queen," replied Jones firmly and Mrs. Murrit and Mrs. Hawkins approved this seemly order.

The toasts were drunk noisily and fully and even the littlest Hawkins had a sip from Eliza's mug. When the party broke up both the boys were a bit light-headed from excitement and ale.

They went upstairs to their attic home and Jones found that Mrs. Hawkins had helped Willie clean it for him. The skylight was washed and polished so that he could see the stars through it. Jones went around the room seeing that everything was in its proper place. He was happy to be home. Willie was happy to have him home and said what fun it was to be a family. Then they rolled up in their quilts and Jones was asleep before he could take off the now not-so-shiny buckled shoes which he had clung to through everything.

The next morning some of Jones' new training showed

up bright and early and startled Willie pretty badly. "Let's take our quilts down to the river and wash them," said Jones. "It is a sunny morning and they will be dry by tonight."

Willie stared. "Wash them? Whatever for?"

"Because they are filthy." Jones wrinkled his nose. "They 'ave never been washed since we've 'ad them."

Willie was baffled. Then he brightened. He had found the answer to this outlandish notion. "They would only get dirty again straight off so what would be the good?"

One might think that Jones would now settle down in "that station in life for which the Lord intended him" as Mrs. Murrit put it. He had had his fun and paid for it so now they were all sure that he would be satisfied. But they reckoned without the stubbornness which the Cockney boy had in full measure.

For three uneventful weeks he lived as he always had before. The morning after his return he was waiting to go to work when Mr. Rogers came to take down the shutters. That gentleman greeted him with a smile.

"The Boy Jones, I presume?"

Jones grinned. "So you 'ave 'eard about me." Very nice he thought it.

"To be sure. All London has heard of you now. Our Jones has become a celebrity. You look chipper enough so presumably they fed you well at Cold-Bath Fields."

"Fed me, Sir? Mrs. Martin fair stuffed me. She's the Keeper's wife, and we got on well together. Of course that

kind of 'ome life is rather stuffy. I do like to come and go as I please."

"Yes, Jones, I think we all know that now. So prison is just a stuffy Victorian home life." Mr. Rogers seemed to think something rather funny. Jones could not say what. "Not what I would have imagined at all. But then I really know so little about it. A limited life, that of a bookseller. So little ever happens to us outside the printed page."

"Yes, Sir," agreed Jones, perhaps not very tactfully. He went on to tell once again the tale of his adventures. When he praised Lady Sandwich, Mr. Rogers remarked:

"I would have expected something of the sort from the lady. She has a nice taste in books, you know, and is one of our best customers."

"Oh, is she one of *our* customers?" Jones' face lighted up. Here was another bond between him and his gentle friend and he hadn't even known about it. "Fancy that now."

Jones worked hard for days. He didn't really approve of Willie's care of the stock though he had meant well. Then he became restless and as always his restlessness took the form of an urge to go back to Buckingham Palace.

Then one evening there was a pea-soup fog—the kind that is like a thick yellow smoke with a touch of wet blanket. It not only turns day into night but it extinguishes all the lights from lanterns and gas lamps that are effectual in a proper night. Noises are stilled—or smothered—and London becomes almost a deserted city to judge from its streets.

Jones knew blindfold every lane and alley between Friday Street and Buckingham Palace so he welcomed the fog that made his entrance the simplest matter in the world. As he climbed over the fence and slid down inside, a guard posted five feet away could not see him and did not hear him.

From the sounds Jones judged that something very gay and noisy was going on in the White Drawing Room. He hadn't ever before heard such laughter in the Palace for the Court levees that he had witnessed had never seemed to be much fun for anyone. He went down the hall cautiously and peered in at the open folding doors.

A fancy dress ball was going on—and such fancy dress! Generals and admirals—Gog and Magog—Queen Caroline and Beau Brummel—Grimaldi, the King of Clowns, and Guy Fawkes—Dick Turpin and Jack Sheppard, the famous highwaymen—Nell Gwynn and a Bow Street Runner, all were cavorting in the highest of spirits. Jones had never thought the aristocracy capable of such lightheartedness.

Then he began to recognize people under their disguises. Dick Turpin made him draw back quickly for it was his old enemy the under-butler and he looked as insufferable as ever to the boy. Pretty Nell Gwynn danced by with flaming cheeks—his scullery maid friend. He waited until she pranced around again quite near the door—then he reached through and plucked at her skirt.

As the maid stopped and looked around she saw Jones beckoning to her from the doorway. No one was watching her so she stepped quickly out into the hall.

"Whatever brings you 'ere, lambie?" she asked. "You'll get caught as you did last time just as sure."

"No, I won't." Jones was confident. "I'll go 'ide right away. But the party does look fun," he added wistfully.

"It is fun. 'Er Majesty and all the Court are at Windsor. We've all been waiting for months for them to go away so we could 'ave a proper ball. You couldn't 'ave any fun with Prince Albert in the 'ouse lookin' down 'is nose at everythin'. Besides 'e'd never allow it at all—call it wasteful 'e would. 'E even goes so far as to 'ave all the candles blown out every night and saves them for another day." She was properly scornful of domestic economies. "I've 'eard tell that the Ladies of the Court say 'e 'as the soul of an 'ousemaid but 'e's not like any 'ousemaid I know, praise be."

Her indignation had carried her on. Now she stopped. "You'll be caught I do fear, but if you really want to come to the party I'll get Perce and see what he can do about findin' some clothes for you."

"Oh, would you really?"

Perce was willing enough to be helpful and he and Jones went off upstairs together. "You wait 'ere a minute, Jones. I'll be back in a jiffy."

Jones waited and presently Perce returned looking pleased with 'imself. "Put these on," he told Jones.

"These" were a pair of long tight trousers and a cutaway coat. They were nowhere near the right size but they cut off legs and sleeves raggedly with a sharp knife. When Jones had dressed up Perce produced a top hat. It quite

engulfed Jones' head and he had to spread out his ears for it to rest on.

"Who am I supposed to be, Perce?" asked Jones.

Perce giggled. "Don't you know? You're 'is Royal 'Igh and Mightiness Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg Gotha. I got them clothes in 'is dressin' room."

"Oh!" Jones gulped once. Then he laughed. It would be fun anyway.

They went back to the ballroom and it was fun—until twelve o'clock. The hat came down so far over Jones' face that his enemy didn't recognize him even when he stared directly at him. Everyone thought this miniature of the Prince very amusing and soon he entered into the game and gave spirited imitations of Prince Albert as he had seen him through the curtains.

"We don't do that any more, do we *Weibchen?* It does not quite become a reigning monarch." His tone was high and priggish and Jones fondly hoped that he sounded just like the Prince— There was a dead silence. Jones looked up. There *was* Prince Albert staring coldly at the assemblage.

Jones slipped behind the others, caught Perce's eye and the two boys went out through a window onto the balcony. It seemed a better place to be while the Prince was addressing the staff.

They could hear His Royal Highness inquiring into the meaning of the scene.

Then a nervous voice said, "We didn't think you would be 'ere, Sir."

"I am sure of that," replied the Prince. "It is well that I came it seems. You may all leave now but you shall hear more of the matter tomorrow."

"I'll wager we will," sighed Perce as the two climbed from their balcony on to another that let them into a smaller reception room. From there they watched their chance to get away.

At half past four Jones and Perce's sister met in the pantries for a snack. The scullery maid was worried about the discipline to come and about Jones. Perce just wanted to go to sea. It was the one thing he could talk about.

"I'd let you go now, Perce, truly I would," said his sister, "but things are going to be bad enough for a bit without gettin' Mrs. Cook after me because she 'as no knife-boy."

Jones wanted Perce to get his wish. "I think I know a boy to take Perce's place 'ere. Of course you'd 'ave to show 'im what to do and all but I'll bring 'im if you like."

"That is first rate, Jones." Perce had known all along that Jones was a lad after his own heart.

"Why don't you stay and do it yourself?" asked the maid. "Mrs. Cook 'as never seed you and you'd never meet anyone from the rest of the Palace."

"But that's just the trouble," said Jones. "I should 'ate just to stay down 'ere. I 'ave to be free so I can get about the Palace."

The maid had an open mind and it made her a good sister and a good friend. "Well, it's a strange taste," she said now, "but you do just as you like. If you bring a boy to do Perce's work, then Perce can go to sea. And I 'ope you'll both be 'appy."

Willie was not too hard to persuade to fall in with the plan. If his family Jones was going to live in Buckingham Palace it might be just as well for him to be there too. Knife-boy suited him well enough though he wasn't sure just what that meant and Perce's sister sounded like a good person to have as a friend.

That night the scullery maid made an excuse to stay in the kitchens after the others were through with their work. She was nervous and jumped when the coal train came shuttling into the passage behind her.

"What on earth?" she began as two heads popped out.

"Thought we'd come in style," laughed Jones. "The train was in the coal shed where we were 'iding till the others went to bed. This 'ere is Willie," he added unnecessarily.

" 'Allo, Willie. I guess we'll get on well enough but you'll 'ave to look sharp about your work so Mrs. Cook doesn't catch you out."

"Where's Perce?" asked Jones.

" 'E went right after dinner—said 'Er Majesty needs 'im at sea more than in 'Er kitchen. Fair considers 'e 'as a naval appointment, 'e does." She laughed shakily, not wanting the boys to know how much she already missed her little brother. " 'E said to tell you good-by, Jones, and that 'e would see you again some day with luck."

"That's all right then," said Jones. "I'll go find me a room now upstairs and see you both tomorrow night."

"Well, you are a one and no mistake," said both the maid and Willie together. "Good night."

On this trip Jones discovered the library where no one ever came to read the thirty thousand volumes housed on its shelves. The boy read avidly for several days—histories of England and of the world, lives of great men, novels that made imaginary people just as real, stories of dragons and other mythical beasts. They all became so jumbled in Jones' mind that he could not tell fact from fancy by daylight and they loomed large and improbable in his dreams. He left the library at night to forage for food and meet his friends for a sociable talk.

Had Jones been content to stay in the library he might have gone undiscovered for months. But even this fascinating place did not content him for long so he began again to explore. Fate was against him, this time because of the domestic reforms introduced by the Prince Consort.

Nowadays when the Queen and the Court retired for the night from the brilliantly lighted drawing room, a transformation scene took place. A Sergeant Steward and a troop of lesser attendants came in to cover sofas and chairs with dust sheets and to snuff out all the candles.

As soon as they had left, Jones crept in, struck a match on the mantel and lit a stub of candle taken from his pocket. With a rare absent-mindedness he dropped the burnt out match to the floor. Going to the window, he pulled the cord and opened the curtains to let the brilliant moonlight flood into the room. He was still looking out at the ghost of the gardens when he heard footsteps. Quickly, he blew out his candle, lifted the dustsheet and crept under the sofa.

Prince Albert came in, carrying a candle, on a tour of

inspection to make sure that his orders had been carried out to the last detail. All seemed as it should be until he noticed the blackened match stub on the floor near the sofa. Muttering disapproval of such slackness, he stooped to pick it up and saw Jones peeking out at him from under the sheet.

"Who is that under there? Who are you? Come out instantly!"

Jones emerged sheepishly—really this getting caught was becoming a bad habit with him. He waited as he was ordered until His Royal Highness summoned servants and guard.

In the doorway he saw a small figure in pigtails and dressing gown.

"Albert, dear, are you quite safe?" Her Majesty looked like a frightened little girl.

"Of course. You go to your room now. I shall see to everything." Prince Albert sounded quite his most efficient.

Jones bowed awkwardly to Her Majesty but he was jerked upright without ceremony by his old enemy. The sight of the under-butler again was just too much and Jones kicked him sharply in the shins. His one satisfaction in the whole scene was the man's sharp yelp.

From that point the procedure followed the earlier occasion of his disgrace in every detail except that the Lady Sandwich was abroad this time. He did miss her friendly face.

The arrest—the court—the judge's sentence—the trip

to prison were all like a dream that repeats itself, and Jones spent another four months in Cold-Bath Fields.

Time passed quickly enough and on a golden day in late September Jones was listening politely to the parting advice of the Keeper.

"Remember," this sensible man concluded, "I'll expect you to behave reasonably this time. Get on about finding yourself a place in service. You are quick-witted and neat-fingered and if you want a reference I shall be glad to say that you worked in my household to our entire satisfaction. So stop playing the fool around Buckingham Palace. It might go harder with you next time. Good-by now and don't let me see you again." A crown was slipped into Jones' hand.

"Yes, Sir, I'll remember, and thank you, Sir." He was dazed by this unexpected largesse or he might not have agreed so easily. The gate clanged and he was left outside.

Putting the coin in his pocket, taking it out again to feel its agreeable weight in his grimy paw occupied his whole attention for a few minutes and he did not notice that he was being watched.

Presently a flashy individual in a tight-fitting waistcoat of brilliant blue and wonderfully checked trousers came up to him. Jones did not notice his toothy smile for his own gaze was fixed upon the heavy gold chain draped tastefully across his prominent middle.

He was surprised when the man spoke to him. "You're Jones that camped out in Buckingham Palace—am I right?"

"Yes, Sir. That is to say I live in the Palace. You couldn't call it camping out."

"That's the kind of talk I like to 'ear! Do you want to make a tidy sum of money?"

"Of course." That was as silly a question as ever Jones had heard.

"It's this way. I 'ave a music hall—strictly 'igh class, you know. Seems to me it would be a good stunt to 'ave you do a sort of skit on life in the old Palace. You know, you could tell all the gossip you've 'eard there. Bet you didn't miss much, eh?" He dug Jones playfully in the ribs.

"You're mad as Bedlam!" Jones was properly indignant. "Me tell all those people things about 'Er Majesty and 'Er Ladies and Gentlemen? Not much, I wouldn't!"

"Come now, don't be 'asty. I'll give you four pounds for just one week and I can't say fairer than that. That's big money, boy."

Four pounds a week was a staggering sum indeed but Jones refused to change his mind for all the breezy gentleman's arguments. He certainly would not accept even this fortune to gossip about the home life of his sovereign.

Such loyalty was beyond the ken of the music hall proprietor and he concluded sadly, in spite of Jones' protests, that someone else had gotten to him first with a better offer. He demanded the name of his fortunate rival. Unable to make the man believe him, Jones gave up and ran off down the street.

Chapter Fifteen

MRS. MURRIT was really angry with Jones when he came home after this second prolonged absence.

"If I have tried to teach you anything, my lad, it was to know your place and keep yourself to yourself. It is not respectable, this stravaging about and getting into trouble with the authorities over and over again. How do you think Her poor Majesty feels if she can't be sure in her own Palace of not running into ragged strangers in every hall—or even in her own royal chamber? Three times you have stayed there by your own account and twice you have been sent to prison for it. It's excessive and redundant—that's what it is—redundant. Now Willie is there but in a fitting position. That's all very well for he knows his place."

Jones listened respectfully, said, "Yes, Ma'am, of

course," at decent intervals then won her over to good nature again by telling her of his refusal of a fortune on the music hall stage.

She relented, but not entirely. "That's a little better. We shall just hope that you have learned a bit of sense at last . . . but you'll get no homecoming party this time, not were it ever so. That is my last word on the subject." She took a deep breath and continued without pause for another fifteen minutes to deliver her last word.

There was no party for Mrs. Murrit was true to her word. Nonetheless she was glad to have him home and she fed him well whenever he stopped at the coffee stall.

Most of his other friends envied him rather than scolded and they were happy to see his cheerful face back among them. There was no lack of hospitality in their homes or at their street barrows and it was more than a week before he had to spend tuppence of the fortune given him by Mr. Martin.

On an afternoon off duty, Willie came back to Cheapside to visit his old home. He was too tired to go prowling about London as they used to but he and Jones talked in the garret.

Willie liked his work, he told Jones "all but that there Mrs. Cook. She's a tartar but none too agile so it ain't 'ard to keep out of 'er way."

" 'Ow is everything at the Palace? Just the same?" Jones was wistful.

"Yes, of course it's just the same. Nothing ever 'appens. Nothing but you that is. There was a rare lot of talk about you. They do say everyone above stairs was in a taking."

Jones was getting more homesick by the minute but he had promised—well, not exactly, but almost—Mrs. Murrit to settle down to a sensible way of life.

"What are you goin' to do next, Jones?" Willie echoed Jones' own thoughts.

"Don't know—something will turn up."

A fortnight after his return to his old haunts, Jones took a walk—just past Buckingham Palace. He had no intention of going in, he told himself firmly, and for almost twenty minutes he remembered his promises.

Along the fence he dawdled, looking over the grounds toward the lake. Were those new ducks over there? Strangest ducks he had ever seen. They were huge and gay and had long pink legs. Not ducks—he remembered hard his natural history books—he had it—Flamingoes! He must just see them once close to. He was over the fence and over the hedge and into the grounds.

Soon he tired of the flamingoes with their gaudy plumage. He found them dull and stupid. Now ducks had much more engaging ways. . . .

He was seized by three under-gardeners and their chief and all he was doing was sitting on the bank quacking back at a yellow-striped duck. They took him to Prince Albert.

His Royal Highness could see neither rhyme nor reason to these invasions and his imagination boggled at believing the facts as Jones told them.

The news spread quickly through the Palace that Jones was back. It reached My Lady Sandwich. Picking up

her skirts she positively ran to where he was being interviewed by the Prince. She tried to plead for him but to no avail.

"But what does he want here? Tell me that, My Lady!" the Prince demanded. When he was angry his voice became thickly German—and he was very angry now at something he could not understand.

"No doubt the lad is a direct descendant of In-I-Go Jones," said the lady.

"In-I-Go?" asked the Prince.

"Yes. Inigo Jones was one of our most famous architects two hundred years ago."

"Oh. In-I-Go. Yes, I see. Not very amusing, My Lady," said His Royal Highness flatly and finally.

Lady Sandwich wanted to take the matter to the Queen but she was forbidden to do so by Prince Albert. She could not disobey an almost royal command and she knew very well that it would do little good anyway. In most things nowadays Her Majesty did just as her husband bade her.

There was not even a pretense of a trial this time. The Prince Consort decided to send the Boy Jones to sea on one of Her Majesty's battleships. Without so much as a chance to get his few belongings, he was hustled aboard the *Warspite* which happened to be in the Pool of London.

Again the press made much of his adventures and Punch gave an amusing account of them which ended with lines that were repeated in all parts of the city.

One night, returnin' 'ome to bed,
I walked through Pim-li-co,
And twiggin' of the Palass, said,
'I'm Jones and In-I-go.'
But afore I could get out, my boys,
Polïsseman 20 A,
'E caught me by the corderoys,
And lugged me right away.
They forced me from my native land
Across the waves to go-o-oh,
But all their spiteful arts is vain
My spirits down to keep:
I 'ope I'll soon get back again,
To take another peep.

Chapter Sixteen

MANY an English lad has gone to sea with a right good will but for the most part they have been boys from seacoast towns who have grown up with the smell of salt air and tarred rope in their nostrils. With others, even city boys like Perce, the sea has been an obsession from the time they can remember.

Jones was a true product of the London streets—in them he was at home. It is rather doubtful if he would have enjoyed a sailor's life under any circumstances. Now, placed aboard the *Warspite* without so much as a by-your-leave, he resented it as keenly as he could ever resent anything fate offered.

Largely because it was less trouble to do so, Jones began to perform his duties adequately but without any marked enthusiasm. He did not learn nautical terms with the same ease with which he had picked up other bits of

knowledge. In all his days at sea, he never knew a marlinspike from a belaying pin without stopping to think it out.

His officers had no complaints to make about his general behavior. He obeyed their orders with an "Aye, aye, Sir!" that bordered closely on indifference. Appeals to his patriotism and repeated mention of the Sea as the Briton's Bulwark left him quite unmoved. Despite all this, the officers liked both his cockney grin and his essential good nature. They had heard all about him too, of course, and rather admired his tenacious spirit.

There were so many sailors—thousands of them it looked to Jones—that he was never able to tell them apart. One sunny morning he was polishing up the brass rail—this was almost fun—when he was hailed in a loud Cockney shout.

"I'll be blowed if it ain't Jones!"

Perce was grinning from ear to ear. "Said I'd see you again some day and 'struth, 'ere you are. Ain't it a small world? 'Ow did you ever come 'ere?"

"I got caught again, Perce. They said Cold-Bath Fields did no good so they'd see what the sea would do for me."

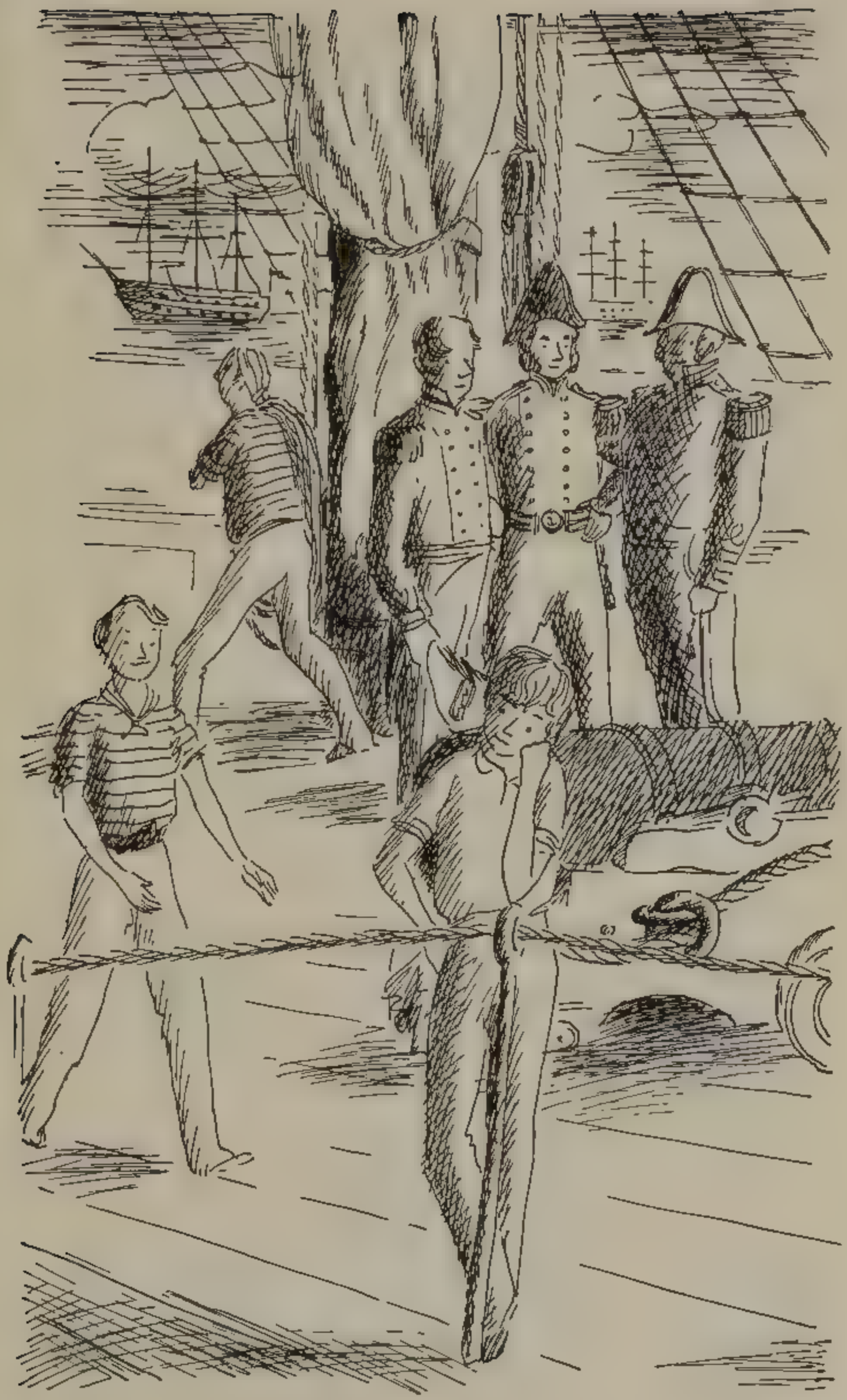
"And what is it doin' for you?"

"Nothin'. Course I'm hungry all the time 'ere. They say it's the salt air or somethin'."

"Well, if you're 'ungry come below. My job's in the galley—that's kitchen ashore—and none so different from I 'ad at Buckingham Palace."

"Why not go back to the Palace then?"

"Who—me? Go back to livin' ashore when I can be at



sea. Not a bloomin' chance. I belong in 'Er Majesty's Navy, I do."

"All right. All right, if you feel that way about it. When can we meet again?"

"Come down to the galley when you're off duty. The Cook's a good fellow 'ere. 'E won't mind—not like some I could mention at the Palace."

After a few weeks of cruising, the *Warspite* put into Portsmouth for repairs. Jones went down to the galley to see his friend.

"Well, I'm off for London with any luck. I think life at sea is worse than prison. No offense intended, Perce."

"None taken where none intended," replied Perce. "Good-luck! 'Ope they don't catch you."

Without further formality, Jones abandoned his ship and walked to London more than sixty miles. He did not hurry too much for London would wait for him.

The Sussex downs were green and pleasant and soft to lie upon. From them you could watch the blue sea—"if it's water you want" Jones thought. It was not what he wanted so he ambled on over downs and meadows, up gentle hills and through still greener valleys. Though it was late November, the weather was balmy and the sun shone as warmly as it did in summer.

The nights were chillier but the city child discovered that there is no warmer bed than a hay mow. In his pocket, he still had most of the crown given him by Mr. Martin. It was in small coins now which he sometimes exchanged for meals along the road. He didn't have to use much of his hoard for he found that farmers were usually willing

enough to give him bread and cheese and their motherly wives would not let them take money from the homeless boy—an orphan, he was careful to explain.

As he neared his destination and saw the heavy smoke of London lying on the still air, he began to hurry. There is no pleasure so keen as coming home.

By that time word of his escape had been sent to London by his officers who asked that a sharp look-out be kept for the deserter in Cheapside and in the vicinity of Buckingham Palace. He was arrested just as he was turning into Birdcage Walk. He had meant only to look at the Palace before going home to his friends in Friday Street.

Jones was returned to his ship summarily. A good deal of discipline of an unpleasant nature might well have been expected as the result of his escapade. The fact that nothing drastic happened him justified Jones' faith in human nature. It might be evidence, too, that the red-faced Admiral in his gold lace was not as entirely unamused by him as was Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg Gotha.

Perce could not hide his delight at his friend's return to the ship but he tried to show a decent sympathy when they met.

"Bad luck, old fellow. It might be better next time if you jump overboard and swim ashore. Then with any sort of a decent chance, they'd think you had drowned." Even Perce knew now that Jones was sure to try again.

"Good idea, that, Perce. But I can't swim."

"Can't swim? Fancy that now. I'll teach you if you like

whenever we have spare time on our hands." Perce was really shocked at any lad who couldn't swim.

So it was arranged. Whenever the *Warspite* was anchored near shore the two lads would slip overboard and Jones would have a lesson. At first Perce had to hold him up in deep water but not for very long. This was one thing about the sea that Jones could approve of—swimming to get out of it.

The next spring the *Warspite* was anchored far offshore between Tunis and Algiers. On a dark moonless night the buoy lights could be seen flickering in the distance. Jones and Perce were on the deck talking quietly.

"Tonight I'll try it," said Jones.

Perce was sorry that the time had come. "The shore is an awful long ways away, Jones."

"I know it but I can swim an awful long way now. Besides this is a good safe sea—with no sharks or anything."

Perce had to admit that there were no sharks but still he didn't like it. "Well—good-by." From the rail Jones dove straight and cleanly into the water far below. Perce heard a faint hail, then silence as he stood for a long time on the deck looking out at the dark sea. Finally he turned away and went to find an officer.

A young ensign on his way to his quarters was stopped by a voice "Please, Sir, Jones 'as fallen overboard."

"Jones? Who is he?" Then he remembered. "This is terrible, you say he has fallen overboard?"

"Well, not exactly, Sir. 'E told me 'e wanted to see the buoy lights burning—then 'e sort of jumped off the rail —or maybe fell."

"Could Jones swim?"

"When 'e joined this ship, Sir, 'e couldn't swim a stroke."

The Ensign waited to hear no more but rushed off down the deck to order boats lowered. For an hour or more searchlights played over the sea but no trace was ever found of the Boy Jones.

During all these months nothing had been heard of Jones in England but he had not been entirely forgotten. When a report was circulated that he had fallen overboard from the *Warspite* it received prominent attention in the public prints. The boy had captured the popular imagination to such an extent that there was a great deal of indignation over his supposed death. "These ships ought to be made safer," people said, "or where were all their lads to be? 'Twas a crying shame that such a thing could happen."

His officers came in for so much criticism in the matter that one of them, who thought he knew the circumstances fully, wrote to the *Times* to give his version of the affair. The Boy Jones had not fallen overboard, he said, but had jumped from the rail after telling a shipmate that he wanted to see the buoy lights burning. Although the lad was not born to the sea so to speak, as anyone could tell, still he was willing and cheerful and both his shipmates and his officers regretted his untimely passing, none more deeply than the writer who signed himself, Sir, yrs. respectfully, A. R. Smythe, Lt.-Com.

Jones' friends had long since taken to watching the

newspapers for accounts of his activities, and Mrs. Murrit read them the officer's letter with the deepest gloom.

Mrs. Hawkins went into heavy black left over from her late husband's demise and Mrs. Murrit always afterward referred to him as the Late Lamented. Willie's eyes and nose were suspiciously pink the next day as he went about his work. Alf and 'Enery and even Artie had no heart to cry their wares.

The Boy Jones, Cockney extraordinary, and adventurer of no mean talent had gone but his fame lived.

Chapter Seventeen

TWO years after the disappearance of the Boy Jones, one of the footmen was dismissed from his position at Buckingham Palace. He was satisfactory in most ways, the housekeeper reported, but his powdered wig gave him hay fever. He could not help it, poor soul, but it made ladies nervous if he sneezed down their necks when helping them on with their cloaks.

A new footman had to be found—and at once to take his place. Many were interviewed but none came up to the standards of excellence required in all the staff by the Prince Consort. The housekeeper was becoming worried when Lady Sandwich announced that she had just the man for them. She gave him a splendid reference herself and lauded his ability in all footmanly duties as performed in her household during the past two years. She would never have parted with him, never, had she not felt that

his domestic talents should have a wider field. Then too she always wished to be helpful to Prince Albert in keeping the Palace efficiency up to standard.

"Send 'im along at once, My Lady, and I only 'ope 'e is 'alf as good 'ere as 'e was with you."

The new footman exceeded her most rosy expectations. Though young in countenance, despite elaborately curled sideburns, and slight of figure, he was eminently suited for his position. He knew his duties and performed them with a precision that drew envious glances from his superiors on the staff. "And it was fair uncanny," she said, " 'ow 'e knew 'is way about all the rooms and passages at once."

He got on well with everyone, liked them and found them well disposed toward himself. The unpleasant under-butler of Jones' day had been discharged months ago for impertinence. He had two particular friends on the staff and they were both in the kitchens. Of an evening he would often be found enjoying a snack and having a good talk with the scullery maid and the knife-boy.

A model of decorum at all times, the new footman observed the utmost respect toward his betters. Only once was he ever seen to relax his customary deferential expression. That was one evening when Lady Sandwich met him by chance on duty at the foot of the Grand Staircase and a conspiratorial glance and friendly smile passed between them.

His days off, the young footman nearly always spent in Cheapside where he was always welcomed by his friends Mrs. Murrit, Mrs. Hawkins, and all the now not-so-little

Hawkinses, Alf, and 'Enery and Artie. Mrs. Hawkins and Mrs. Murrit mothered him a good deal, although he was tall and had a well-fed look about him. In return he was able to tell them all the news of the Royal Family before it reached the Court Circular.

On his way back to the Palace he would stop in St. Paul's Churchyard to visit Mr. Rogers. The bookseller was glad to see him and often lent him books to take home, for another of the young man's virtues was a nice taste in reading.

The name of this paragon among the royal servants was

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